

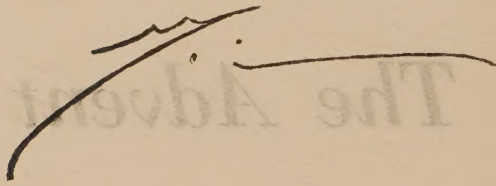
The Advent



V.7-9
1950-52

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*The disciples judge the forms
by the Master, others judge the
Master by the forms.*


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The ADVENT

February 1950

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Armed, bearer of the weapon and the sign
Whose occult might no magic can imitate,
Manifold yet one she sat, a guardian force:
A saviour gesture stretched her lifted arm,
And symbol of some native cosmic strength,
A sacred beast lay prone below her feet,
A silent flame-eyed mass of living force.
All underwent a high celestial change:
Breaking the black Inconscient's blind mute wall,
Effacing the circles of the Ignorance,
Powers and divinities burst flaming forth;
Each part of the being trembling with delight
Lay overwhelmed with tides of happiness
And saw her hand in every circumstance
And felt her touch in every limb and cell.

SRI AUROBINDO

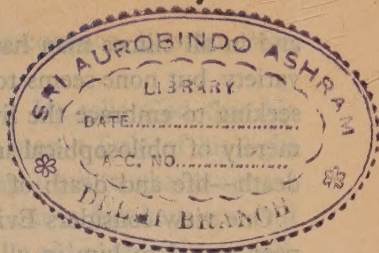
(FROM *Savitri*, BOOK OF YOGA, CANTO 2)



The Lotus

by Krishnalal

The flowers have, apart from their æsthetic appeal, a mystic significance also. Each variety is given a special meaning in the sadhana. The red lotus is the Avatar, the white is the Divine Consciousness (Atman).



THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIAL

GOETHE BICENTENARY

THE year 1949 has just celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great force of light that was Goethe. We too remember him on the occasion, and will try to present in a few words, as we see it, the fundamental experience, the major Intuition that stirred this human soul, the lesson he brought to mankind. Goethe was a great poet. He showed how a language, perhaps least poetical by nature, can be moulded to embody the great beauty of great poetry. He made the German language sing, even as the sun's ray made the stone of Memnon sing when falling upon it. Goethe was a man of consummate culture. Truly and almost literally it could be said of him that nothing human he considered foreign to his enquiring mind. And Goethe was a man of great wisdom. His observation and judgment on things—no matter to whatever realm they belong—have an arresting appropriateness, a happy and revealing insight. But above all, he was an aspiring soul—aspiring to know and be in touch with the hidden Divinity in man and the world.

GOETHE AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

No problem is so vital to the human consciousness as the problem of Evil—its why and wherefore. It is verily the Sphinx Riddle. In all ages

and in all climes man has tried to answer; the answers are of an immense variety, but none seems to be sure and certain. Goethe's was an ardent soul seeking to embrace the living truth whole and entire; the problem was not merely of philosophical interest to him, but a burning question of life and death—life and death of the body and even of the soul.

One view considers Evil as coeval with Good: the Prince of Evil is God's peer, equal to him in all ways, absolutely separate, independent and self-existent. Light and Darkness are eternal principles living side by side, possessing equal reality. For, although it is permissible to the individual to pass out of the darkness and enter into Light, the Darkness itself does not disappear: it remains and maintains its domain, and even it is said that some human beings are meant eternally for this domain. That is the Manichean principle and that also is fundamentally the dualistic conception of *chit-achit* in some Indian systems (although the principle of *chit* or light is usually given a higher position and priority of excellence).

The Christian too accepts the dual principle, but does not give equal status to the two. Satan is there, an eternal reality: it is anti-God, it seeks to oppose God, frustrate his work. It is the great tempter whose task it is to persuade, to inspire man to remain always an earthly creature and never turn to know or live in God. Now the crucial question that arises is, what is the necessity of this Antagonist in God's scheme of creation? What is the meaning of this struggle and battle? God could have created, if he had chosen, a world without Evil. The orthodox Christian answer is that in that case one could not have fully appreciated the true value and glory of God's presence. It is to manifest and proclaim the great victory that the strife and combat has been arranged in which Man triumphs in the end and God's work stands vindicated. The place of Satan is always Hell, but he cannot drag down a soul into his pit to hold it there eternally (although according to one doctrine there are or may be certain eternally damned souls).

Goethe carries the process of convergence and even harmony of the two powers a little further and shows that although they are contrary apparently, they are not contradictory principles in essence. For, Satan is after all God's servant, even a very obedient servant; he is an instrument in the hand of the Almighty to work out His purpose. The purpose is to help and lead man, although in a devious way, towards a greater understanding, a nearer approach to Himself.

THE CHALLENGE AND THE PACT

There is on the earthly stage the play of a challenge, a twofold challenge,

one between God and Satan and another, as a consequence, between Man and Satan.

Satan is jealous of man who is God's favourite. He tells God that his partiality to man is misplaced. God has put into man a little of his light (reason and intelligence and something more perhaps), but to what purpose? Man tries to soar, he thinks he flies high and wide, but in fact he is and will be an insect that "lies always in the grass and sings its old song in the grass". God answers that whatever the perplexity in which man now is, in the end he will come out and reach the Light with a greater and richer experience of it. Satan smiles in return and says he will prove otherwise. Given a free hand he can do whatever he likes with man: "Dust shall he eat and with a relish." God willingly agrees to the challenge: there is no harm in Satan's trying his hand. Indeed, Satan will prove to be a good companion to man; for man is normally prone to inertia and sinks into repose and rest and stagnation. Satan will be the goad, the force that drives towards ceaseless activity. For activity is life, and without activity no progress.

Thus, as sanctioned by God, there is a competition, a wager between man and Satan. The pact between the parties is this that, on the one hand, Satan will serve man *here* in the life upon earth, and on the other hand, in return, man will have to serve Satan *there*, on the other side of life. That is to say, Satan will give the whole world to man to enjoy, man will have to give Satan only his soul. Man in his ignorance says he does not care for his soul, does not know of a *there* or elsewhere: he will be satisfied if he gets what he wants upon earth. That evidently is the demand of what is familiarly known as life-force (*élan vital*): the utmost fulfilment of the life-force is what man stands for, although the full significance of the movement may not be clear to him or even to Satan at the moment. For life-force does not necessarily drag man down, as its *grand finale* as it were, into hell—however much Satan might wish it to be so. In what way, we shall see presently. Now, Satan promises man all that he would desire and even more: he would give him his fill so that he will ask for no more. Man takes up the challenge and declares that his hunger is insatiable, whatever Satan can bring to it, it will take in and press on: satisfaction and satiety will never come in his way. Satan thinks he knows better, for he is armed with a master weapon to lay man low and make him cry halt!

LOVE HUMAN AND LOVE DIVINE

Satan proposes to lead man down into hell through a sure means, nothing more sure, according to him, viz., love for a woman and a woman's love in

return. Nothing like that to make man earth-bound or hell-bound and force out of him the nostalgic cry, "Time must have a stop". A most simple, primal and primeval lyric love will most suit Satan's purpose. Hence the Margaret episode. Love=Passion=Lust=Hell: that is the inevitable equation sequence, and through which runs the magic thread of infatuation. And that charm is invincible. Satan did succeed and was within an ace, as they say, of the final and definitive triumph: but that was not to be, for he left out of account an incalculable element. Love, even human love has, at least can have, a wonderful power, the potency of reversing the natural decree and bring about a supernatural intervention. Human love can at a crucial moment—in *extremis*—call down the Divine Grace, which means God's love for man. And the soul meant for perdition and about to be seized and carried away by Satan finds itself suddenly free and lifted up and borne by Heaven's messengers. Human love is divine love itself in earthly form and figure and whatever its apparent aberrations it is in soul and substance that thing. Satan is hoisted with his own petard. That is God's irony.

But Goethe's Satan seems to know or feel something of his fate. He knows his function and the limit too of his function. He speaks of the doomsday for people, but it is his doomsday also, he says in mystic terms. Yes, it is his doomsday, for it is the day of man's liberation. Satan has to release man from the pact that stands cancelled. The soul of man cannot be sold, even if he wanted it.

THE COSMIC RHYTHM

The angels weave the symphony that is creation. They represent the various notes and rhythms—in their higher and purer degrees—that make up the grand harmony of the spheres. It is magnificent, this music that moves the cosmos, and wonderful the glory of God manifest therein. But is it absolutely perfect? Is there nowhere any flaw in it? There is a doubting voice that enters a dissenting note. That is Satan, the Antagonist, the Evil One. Man is the weakest link in the chain of the apparently all-perfect harmony. And Satan boldly proposes to snap it if God only let him do so. He can prove to God that the true nature of his creation is not *cosmos* but *chaos*, not a harmony in peace and light, but a confusion, a Walpurgis Night. God acquiesces in the play of this apparent breach and proves in the end that it is part of a wider scheme, a vaster harmony. Evil is rounded off by Grace.

The total eradication of evil from the world and human nature and the remoulding of a terrestrial life in the substance and pattern of the Highest

Good that is beyond all dualities and relativities is a conception which it was not for Goethe to envisage. In the order of reality or existence, first there is the consciousness of division, of trenchant separation in which Good is equated with not-evil and evil with not-good. This is the outlook of individualised consciousness. Next, as the consciousness grows and envelops the whole existence, good and evil are both embraced and are found to form a secret and magic harmony. That is the universal or cosmic consciousness. And Goethe's genius seems to be an outflowing of something of this status of consciousness. But there is still a higher status, the status of transcendence in which evil is not simply embraced but dissolved and even transmuted into a supreme reality of which it is an aberration, a reflection or projection, a lower formulation. That is the mystery of a spiritual realisation to which Goethe aspired perhaps, but had not the necessary initiation to enter into.

GOETHE

A perfect face amid barbarian faces,
A perfect voice of sweet and serious rhyme,
Traveller with calm, inimitable paces,
Critic with judgment absolute to all time,
A complete strength when men were maimed and weak,
German obscured the spirit of a Greek.

(From *Collected Poems and Plays*)

SRI AUROBINDO

Savitri

BOOK VII

THE BOOK OF ETERNAL NIGHT

CANTO II

THE JOURNEY IN ETERNAL NIGHT AND THE VOICE OF THE DARKNESS

A WHILE on the chill dreadful edge of Night
All stood as if a world were doomed to die
And waited on the eternal silence' brink.
Heaven leaned towards them like a cloudy brow
Of menace through the dim and voiceless hush.
As thoughts stand mute on a despairing verge
Where the last depths plunge into nothingness
And the last dreams must end, they paused; in their front
Were glooms like shadowy wings, behind them pale
The lifeless evening was a dead man's gaze.
Hungry beyond, the night desired her soul.
But still in its lone niche of templed strength
Motionless, her flame-bright spirit, mute, erect,
Burned like a torch-fire from a windowed room
Pointing against the darkness' sombre breast.
The Woman first affronted the Abyss
Daring to journey through the eternal Night.
Armoured with light she advanced her foot to plunge
Into the dread and hueless vacancy;
Immortal, unappalled her spirit faced
The danger of the ruthless eyeless waste.
Against night's inky ground they stirred, moulding
Mysterious motion on her human tread,
A swimming action and a drifting march
Like figures moving before eyelids closed:
All as in dreams went slipping, gliding on.
The rock-gate's heavy walls were left behind;
As if through passages of receding time

The present and past into the Timeless lapsed;
Arrested upon dim adventure's brink,
The future ended drowned in nothingness.
Amid collapsing shapes they wound obscure;
The fading vestibules of a tenebrous world
Received them, where they seemed to move and yet
Be still, nowhere advancing yet to pass,
A dumb procession a dim picture bounds,
Not conscious forms threading a real scene.
A mystery of terror's boundlessness,
Gathering its hungry strength the huge pitiless void
Surrounded slowly with its soundless depths,
And monstrous, cavernous, a shapeless throat
Devoured her into its shadowy strangling mass,
The fierce spiritual agony of a dream.
A curtain of impenetrable dread,
The darkness hung around her cage of sense
As when the trees have turned to blotted shades
And the last friendly glimmer fades away,
Around a bullock in the forest tied
By hunters closes in no empty night.
The thought that strives in the world was here unmade;
Its effort it renounced to live and know,
Convinced at last that it had never been;
It perished, all its dream of action done:
This clotted cypher was its dark result.
In the smothering stress of this stupendous Nought
Mind could not think, breath could not breathe, the soul
Could not remember or feel itself; it seemed
A hollow gulf of sterile emptiness,
A zero oblivious of the sum it closed,
An abnegation of the Maker's joy
Saved by no wide repose, no depth of peace.
On all that claims here to be Truth and God
And conscious self and the revealing Word
And the creative rapture of the Mind
And Love and Knowledge and heart's delight, there fell
The immense refusal of the eternal No.
As disappears a golden lamp in gloom
Borne into distance from the eye's desire,

Into the shadows vanished Savitri.
There was no course, no path, no end or goal:
Visionless she moved amid insensible gulfs,
Or drove through some great black unknowing Waste
Or whirled in a dumb eddy of meeting winds
Assembled by the titan hands of Chance.
There was none with her in the dreadful Vast:
She saw no more the vague tremendous god,
Her eyes had lost their luminous Satyavan.
Yet not for this her spirit failed, but held
More deeply than the bounded senses can
Which grasp externally and find to lose
Its object loved. So when on earth they lived
She had felt him straying through the glades, the glades
A scene in her, its clefts her being's vistas
Opening their secrets to his search and joy,
Because to jealous sweetness in her heart
Whatever happy space his cherished feet
Preferred, must be at once her soul embracing
His body, passioning dumbly to his tread.
But now a silent gulf between them came
And to abysmal loneliness she fell
Even from herself cast out, from love remote.
Long hours, since long it seems when sluggish time
Is measured by the throbs of the soul's pain,
In an unreal darkness empty and drear
She travelled treading on the corpse of life,
Lost in a blindness of extinguished souls.
Solitary in the anguish of the void
She lived in spite of death, she conquered still;
In vain her puissant being was oppressed:
Her heavy long monotony of pain
Tardily of its fierce self-torture tired.
At first a faint inextinguishable gleam,
Pale but immortal, flickered in the gloom
As if a memory came to spirits dead,
A memory that wished to live again
Dissolved from mind in Nature's natal sleep.
It wandered like a lost ray of the moon
Revealing to the night her soul of dread;

Serpentine in the gleam the darkness lolled,
Its black hoods jewelled with the mystic glow;
Its dull sleek folds shrank back and coiled and slid,
As though they felt all light a cruel pain
And suffered from the pale approach of hope.
Night felt assailed her heavy sombre reign:
The splendour of some bright eternity
Threatened with this faint beam of wandering Truth
Her empire of the everlasting Nought.
Implacable in her intolerant strength
And confident that she alone was true,
She strove to stifle the frail dangerous ray;
Aware of an all-negating immensity
She reared her giant head of Nothingness,
Her mouth of darkness swallowing all that is;
She saw in herself the tenebrous Absolute.
But still the light prevailed and still it grew,
And Savitri to her lost self awoke;
Her limbs refused the cold embrace of death,
Her heart-beats triumphed in the grasp of pain;
Her soul persisted claiming for its joy
The soul of the beloved now seen no more.
Before her in the stillness of the world
Once more she heard the treading of a god,
And out of the dumb darkness Satyavan,
Her husband, grew into a luminous shade.
Then a sound pealed through that dead monstrous realm:
Vast like the surge in a tired swimmer's ears,
Clamouring, a fatal iron-hearted roar,
Death missioned to the night his lethal call.
"This is my silent dark immensity,
This is the home of everlasting Night,
This is the secrecy of Nothingness
Entombing the vanity of life's desires.
Hast thou beheld thy source, O transient heart,
And known from what the dream thou art was made?
In this stark sincerity of nude emptiness
Hopedst thou still always to last and love?"
The Woman answered not. Her spirit refused
The voice of the Night that knew and Death that thought.

In her beginningless infinity
Through her soul's reaches unconfined she gazed;
She saw the undying fountains of her life,
She knew herself eternal without birth.
But still opposing her with endless night
Death, the dire god, inflicted on her eyes
The immortal calm of his tremendous gaze:
"Although thou hast survived the unborn void
Which never shall forgive, while Time endures,
The primal violence that fashioned thought,
Forcing the immobile Vast to suffer and live
This sorrowful victory only hast thou won
To live for a little without Satyavan.
What shall the ancient goddess give to thee
Who helps thy heart-beats? Only she prolongs
The nothing dreamed existence and delays
With the labour of living thy eternal sleep.
A fragile miracle of thinking clay,
Armed with illusions walks the child of Time.
To fill the void around he feels and dreads,
The void he came from and to which he goes,
He magnifies his self and names it God.
He calls the heavens to help his suffering hopes.
He sees above him with a longing heart
Bare spaces more unconscious than himself
That have not even his privilege of mind
And empty of all but their unreal blue
And peoples them with bright and merciful powers.
For the sea roars around him and earth quakes
Beneath his steps, and fire is at his doors,
And death prowls baying through the woods of life.
Moved by the Presences with which he yearns,
He offers in implacable shrines his soul
And clothes all with the beauty of his dreams.
The gods who watch the earth with sleepless eyes
And guide its giant stumblings through the void,
Have given to man the burden of his mind;
In his unwilling heart they have lit their fires
And sown in it incurable unrest.
His mind is a hunter upon tracks unknown;

Amusing time with vain discovery,
 He deepens with thought the mystery of his fate
 And turns to song his laughter and his tears.
 His mortality vexing with the immortal's dreams,
 Troubling his transience with the infinite's breath,
 They gave him hungers which no food can fill;
 He is the cattle of the shepherd gods.
 His body the tether with which he is tied,
 They cast for fodder grief and hope and joy:
 His pasture ground they have fenced with Ignorance.
 Into his fragile undefended breast
 They have breathed a courage that is met by death,
 They have given a wisdom that is mocked by night,
 They have traced a journey that foresees no goal.
 Aimless man toils in an uncertain world
 Lulled by inconstant pauses of his pain,
 Scourged like a beast by the infinite desire,
 Bound to the chariot of the dreadful gods.
 But if thou still canst hope and still wouldst love,
 Return to thy body's shell they tie to earth,
 And with thy heart's little remnants try to live.
 Hope not to win back to thee Satyavan.
 Yet since thy strength deserves no trivial crown,
 Gifts I can give to soothe thy wounded life.
 The pacts which transient beings make with fate,
 And the wayside sweetness earth-bound hearts would pluck,
 These if thy will accepts make freely thine.
 Choose a life's hopes for thy deceiving prize."
 As ceased the ruthless and tremendous Voice,
 Unendingly there rose in Savitri
 Like moonlit ridges on a shuddering flood
 A stir of thoughts out of some silence born
 Across the sea of her dumb fathomless heart.
 At last she spoke; her voice was heard by Night:
 "I bow not to thee, O huge mask of Death,
 Black lie of night to the cowed soul of man,
 Unreal, inescapable end of things,
 Thou grim jest played with the immortal spirit.
 Conscious of immortality I walk.
 A victor spirit conscious of my force,

Not as a suppliant to thy gates I came:
Unslain I have survived the clutch of Night.
My first strong grief moves not my seated mind;
My unwept tears have turned to pearls of strength:
I have transformed my ill-shaped brittle clay
Into the hardness of a statued soul.
Now in the wrestling of the splendid gods
My spirit shall be obstinate and strong
Against the vast refusals of the world.
I stoop not with the subject mob of minds
Who run to glean with eager satisfied hands
And pick from its mire mid many trampling feet
Its scornful small concessions to the weak.
Mine is the labour of the battling gods:
Imposing on the slow reluctant years
The flaming will that reigns beyond the stars,
They lay the law of Mind on Matter's works
And win the soul's wish from earth's inconscient force.
First I demand whatever Satyavan,
My husband, waking in the forest's charm
Out of his long pure childhood's lonely dreams,
Desired and had not for his beautiful life.
Give, if thou must, or if thou canst, refuse."
Death bowed his head in scornful cold assent,
The builder of this dreamlike earth for man
Who has mocked with vanity all gifts he gave.
Uplifting his disastrous voice he spoke:
"Indulgent to the dreams my touch shall break,
I yield to his blind father's longing heart
Kingdom and power and friends and greatness lost
And royal trappings for his peaceful age,
The pallid pomps of man's declining days,
The silvered decadent glories of life's fall.
To one who wiser grew by adverse fate,
Goods I restore the deluded soul prefers
To impersonal nothingness's bare sublime.
The sensuous solace of the light I give
To eyes which could have found a larger realm,
A deeper vision in their fathomless night.
For that this man desired and asked in vain

While still he lived on earth and cherished hope.
Back from the grandeur of my perilous realms
Go, mortal, to thy small permitted sphere!
Hasten swift-footed, lest to slay thy life
The great laws thou hast violated, moved,
Open at last on thee their marble eyes.”
But Savitri answered the disdainful Shade:
“World-spirit, I was thy equal spirit born.
I am immortal in my mortality.
I tremble not before the immobile gaze
Of the unchanging marble hierarchies
That look with the stone eyes of Law and Fate.
My soul can meet them with its living fire.
Out of thy shadow give me back again
Into earth’s flowering spaces Satyavan
In the sweet transiency of human limbs
To do with him my spirit’s burning will.
I will bear with him the ancient Mother’s load,
I will follow with him earth’s path that leads to God.
Else shall the eternal spaces open to me
While round us strange horizons far recede,
Travelling together the immense unknown.
For I who have trod with him the tracts of Time,
Can meet behind his steps whatever night
Or unimaginable stupendous dawn
Breaks on our spirits in the untrod Beyond.
Wherever thou leadst his soul I shall pursue.”
But to her claim opposed, implacable,
Insisting on the immutable Decree,
Insisting on the immitigable Law
And the insignificance of created things,
Out of the rolling wastes of night there came
Born from the enigma of the unknowable depths
A voice of majesty and appalling scorn.
As when the storm-haired Titan-striding sea
Throws on a swimmer its tremendous laugh
Remembering all the joy its waves had drowned,
So from the darkness of the sovereign night
Against the Woman’s boundless heart arose
The almighty cry of universal Death;

“Hast thou god-wings or feet that tread my stars,
Frail creature with the courage that aspires,
Forgetting thy bounds of thought, thy mortal role?
Their orbs were coiled before thy soul was formed.
I, Death, created them out of my void;
All things I have built in them and I destroy.
I made the worlds my net, each joy a mesh.
A Hunger amorous of its suffering prey,
Life that devours, my image see in things.
Mortal, whose spirit is my wandering breath,
Whose transience was imagined by my smile,
Flee clutching thy poor gains to thy trembling breast
Pierced by my pangs Time shall not soon appease.
Blind slave of my deaf force whom I compel
To sin that I may punish, to desire
That I may scourge thee with despair and grief
And thou come bleeding to me at the last,
Thy nothingness recognised, my greatness known,
Turn nor attempt forbidden happy fields
Meant for the souls that can obey my law,
Lest in their sombre shrines thy tread awake
From their uneasy iron-hearted sleep
The Furies who avenge fulfilled desire.
Dread lest in skies where passion hoped to live,
The Unknown’s lightnings start and terrified,
Lone, sobbing, hunted by the hounds of heaven,
A wounded and forsaken soul, thou flee
Through the long torture of the centuries,
Nor many lives exhaust the tireless Wrath
Hell cannot slake nor heaven’s mercy assuage.
I will take from thee the black eternal grip:
Clasping in thy heart thy fate’s exiguous doles
Depart in peace, if peace for man is just.”
But Savitri answered meeting scorn with scorn,
The mortal woman to the dreadful Lord:
“Who is this God imagined by thy night,
Contemptuously creating worlds disdained,
Who made for vanity the brilliant stars?
Not he who has reared his temple in my thoughts
And made his sacred floor my human heart.

My God is Will and triumphs in his paths,
My God is Love and sweetly suffers all.
To him I have offered hope for sacrifice
And gave my longings as a sacrament.
Who shall prohibit or hedge in his course,
The wonderful, the charioteer, the swift?
A traveller of the million roads of life,
His steps familiar with the lights of heaven
Tread without pain the sword-paved courts of hell;
There he descends to edge eternal joy.
Love's golden wings have power to fan thy void:
The eyes of love gaze starlike through death's night,
The feet of love tread naked hardest worlds.
He labours in the depths, exults on the heights;
He shall remake thy universe, O Death."

She spoke and for a while no voice replied,
While still they travelled through the trackless night
And still that gleam was like a pallid eye
Troubling the darkness with its doubtful gaze.
Then once more came a deep and perilous pause
In that unreal journey through blind Nought;
Once more a Thought, a Word in the void arose
And Death made answer to the human soul:
"What is thy hope? to what dost thou aspire?
This is thy body's sweetest lure of bliss,
Assailed by pain a frail precarious form,
To please for a few years thy faltering sense
With honey of physical longings and the heart's fire
And a vain oneness seeking to embrace
The brilliant idol of a fugitive hour.
And thou, what art thou, soul, thou glorious dream
Of brief emotions made and glittering thoughts,
A thin dance of fireflies speeding through the night,
A sparkling ferment in life's sunlit mire?
Wilt thou claim immortality, O heart,
Crying against the eternal witnesses
That thou and he are endless powers and last?
Death only lasts and the unconscious Void.
I only am eternal and endure.
I am the shapeless formidable Vast,

I am the emptiness that men call Space,
I am a timeless Nothingness carrying all,
I am the Illimitable, the mute Alone.
I, Death and He; there is no other God.
All from my depths are born, they live by death;
All to my depths return and are no more.
I have made a world by my inconscient Force.
My force is Nature that creates and slays
The hearts that hope, the limbs that long to live.
I have made man her instrument and slave,
His body I made my banquet, his life my food.
Man has no other help but only Death;
He comes to me at his end for rest and peace.
I, Death, am the one refuge of thy soul.
The gods to whom man prays can help not man;
They are my imaginations and my moods
Reflected in him by illusions's power.
That which thou seest as thy immortal self
Is a shadowy icon of my infinite,
Is Death in thee dreaming of eternity.
I am the Immobile in which all things move,
I am the nude Inane in which they cease:
I have no body and no tongue to speak,
I commune not with human eye and ear;
Only thy thought gave a figure to my void.
Because, O aspirant to divinity,
Thou calledst me to wrestle with thy soul,
I have assumed a face, a form, a voice.
But if there were a being witnessing all,
How should he help thy passionate desire?
Aloof he watches sole and absolute,
Indifferent to thy cry in nameless calm.
His being is pure, unwounded, motionless, one.
One endless watches the inconscient scene
Where all things perish, as the foam the stars.
The One lives for ever. There no Satyavan
Changing was born and there no Savitri
Claims from brief life her bribe of joy. There love
Came never with his fretful eyes of tears,
Nor Time is there nor the vain vasts of Space.

It wears no living face, it has no name,
No gaze, no heart that throbs, it asks no second
To aid its being or to share its joys.
It is delight immortally alone.
If thou desirest immortality,
Be then alone sufficient to thy soul:
Live in thyself; forget the man thou lovest.
My last grand death shall rescue thee from life;
Then shalt thou rise into thy unnamed source.”
But Savitri replied to the dread Voice:
“O Death, who reasonest, I reason not,
Reason that scans and breaks, but cannot build
Or builds in vain because she doubts her work.
I am, I love, I see, I act, I will.”
Death answered her, one deep surrounding cry:
“Know also. Knowing, thou shalt cease to love
And cease to will, delivered from thy heart,
So shalt thou rest for ever and be still,
Consenting to the impermanence of things.”
But Savitri replied for man to Death:
“When I have loved for ever, I shall know.
Love in me knows the truth all changings mask.
I know that Knowledge is a vast embrace:
I know that every being is myself,
In every heart is hidden the myriad One.
I know the calm Transcendent bears the world,
The veiled Inhabitant, the silent Lord:
I feel his secret act, his intimate fire;
I hear the murmur of the cosmic Voice.
I know my coming was a wave from God.
For all his suns were conscient in my birth,
And one who loves in us came veiled by death.
Then man was born among the monstrous stars
Dowered with a mind and heart to conquer thee.”
In the eternity of his ruthless will
Sure of his empire and his armoured might,
Like one disdaining violent helpless words
From victim lips Death answered not again.
He stood in silence and in darkness wrapped,
A figure motionless, a shadow vague,

Girt with the terrors of his secret sword.
Half-seen in clouds appeared a sombre face;
Night's dusk tiara was his matted hair,
The ashes of the pyre his forehead's sign.
Once more a Wanderer in the unending Night,
Blindly forbidden by dead vacant eyes,
She travelled through the dumb unhoping vasts.
Around her rolled the shuddering waste of gloom,
Its swallowing emptiness and joyless death
Resentful of her thought and life and love.
Through the long fading night by her compelled,
Gliding half-seen on their unearthly path,
Phantasmal in the dimness moved the three.

END OF CANTO TWO

Archie Andrews

THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY*

AT the time when this book was being brought to its close, the first attempt at the foundation of some initial hesitating beginning of the new world-order, which both governments and peoples had begun to envisage as a permanent necessity if there was to be any order in the world at all, was under debate and consideration but had not yet been given a concrete and practical form; but this had to come and eventually a momentous beginning was made. It took the name and appearance of what was called a League of Nations. It was not happy in its conception, well-inspired in its formation or destined to any considerable longevity or a supremely successful career. But that such an organised endeavour should be launched at all and proceed on its way for some time without an early breakdown was in itself an event of capital importance and meant the initiation of a new era in world history; especially, it was an initiative which, even if it failed, could not be allowed to remain without a sequel but had to be taken up again until a successful solution has safeguarded the future of mankind, not only against continued disorder and lethal peril but against destructive possibilities which could easily prepare the collapse of civilisation and perhaps eventually something even that could be described as the suicide of the human race. Accordingly, the League of Nations disappeared but was replaced by the United Nations Organisation which now stands in the forefront of the world and struggles towards some kind of secure permanence and success in the stupendous endeavour on which depends the world's future.

This is the capital event, the crucial and decisive outcome of the world-wide tendencies which Nature has set in motion for her destined purpose. In spite of the constant shortcomings of human effort and its stumbling mentality, in spite of adverse possibilities that may baulk or delay for a time the success of this great adventure, it is in this event that lies the determination of what must be. All the catastrophes that have attended this course of events and seem to arise of purpose in order to prevent the working out of her intention have not prevented, and even further catastrophes will not prevent, the successful emergence and development of an enterprise which has become a necessity for the progress and perhaps the very

* A postscript chapter now added to the forthcoming publication in book form of the series of essays first published in *Arya* (1915-1918.)

existence of the race. Two stupendous and world-devastating wars have swept over the globe and have been accompanied or followed by revolutions with far-reaching consequences which have altered the political map of the earth and the international balance, the once fairly stable equilibrium of five continents, and changed the whole future. A third still more disastrous war with a prospect of the use of weapons and other scientific means of destruction far more fatal and of wider reach than any ever yet invented, weapons whose far-spread use might bring down civilisation with a crash and whose effects might tend towards something like extermination on a large scale, looms in prospect; the constant apprehension of it weighs upon the mind of the nations and stimulates them towards further preparations for war and creates an atmosphere of prolonged antagonism, if not yet of conflict, extending to what is called "cold war" even in times of peace. But the two wars that have come and gone have not prevented the formation of the first and second considerable efforts towards the beginning of an attempt at union and the practical formation of a concrete body, an organised instrument with that object: rather they have caused and hastened this new creation. The League of Nations came into being as a direct consequence of the first war, the U.N.O. similarly as a consequence of the second world-wide conflict. If the third war which is regarded by many if not by most as inevitable does come, it is likely to precipitate as inevitably a further step and perhaps the final outcome of this great world-endeavour. Nature uses such means, apparently opposed and dangerous to her intended purpose to bring about the fruition of that purpose. As in the practice of the spiritual science and art of Yoga one has to raise up the psychological possibilities which are there in the nature and stand in the way of its spiritual perfection and fulfilment so as to eliminate them, even, it may be, the sleeping possibilities which might arise in future to break the work that has been done, so too Nature acts with the world-forces that meet her on her way, not only calling up those which will assist her but raising too, so as to finish with them, those that she knows to be the normal or even the unavoidable obstacles which cannot but start up to impede her secret will. This one has often seen in the history of mankind; one sees it exemplified today with an enormous force commensurable with the magnitude of the thing that has to be done. But always these resistances turn out to have assisted by the resistance much more than they have impeded the intention of the great Creatrix and her Mover.

We may then look with a legitimate optimism on what has been hitherto achieved and on the prospects of further achievement in the future. This optimism need not and should not blind us to undesirable features, perilous

tendencies and the possibilities of serious interruptions in the work and even disorders in the human world that might possibly subvert the work done. As regards the actual conditions of the moment it may even be admitted that most men nowadays look with dissatisfaction on the defects of the United Nations' Organisation and its blunders and the malignancies that endanger its existence and many feel a growing pessimism and regard with doubt the possibility of its final success. This pessimism it is unnecessary and unwise to share; for such a psychology tends to bring about or to make possible the results which it predicts but which need not at all ensue. At the same time we must not ignore the danger. The leaders of the nations, who have the will to succeed and who will be held responsible by posterity for any avoidable failure, must be on guard against unwise policies or fatal errors; the deficiencies that exist in the organisation or its constitution have to be quickly remedied or slowly and cautiously eliminated; if there are obstinate oppositions to necessary change, they have somehow to be overcome or circumvented without breaking the institution; progress towards its perfection, even if it cannot be easily or swiftly made, must yet be undertaken and the frustration of the world's hope prevented at any cost. There is no other way for mankind than this unless indeed a greater way is laid open to it by the Power that guides through some delivering turn or change in human will or human nature or some sudden evolutionary progress, a not easily foreseeable leap, *saltus*, which will make another and greater solution of our human destiny feasible.

In the first idea and form of a beginning of world-union which took the shape of the League of Nations, although there were errors in the structure such as the insistence on unanimity which tended to sterilise, to limit or to obstruct the practical action and effectuality of the League, the main defect was inherent in its conception and in its general build, and that again arose naturally and as a direct consequence from the condition of the world at that time. The League of Nations was in fact an oligarchy of big Powers each drawing behind it a retinue of small States and using the general body so far as possible for the furtherance of its own policy much more than for the general interest and the good of the world at large. This character came out most in the political sphere, and the manoeuvres and discords, accommodations and compromises inevitable in this condition of things did not help to make the action of the League beneficial or effective as it purposed or set out to be. The absence of America and the position of Russia had helped to make the final ill-success of this first venture a natural consequence, if not indeed unavoidable. In the constitution of the U.N.O. an attempt was made in principle at least, to escape from these errors; but

the attempt was not thoroughgoing and not altogether successful. A strong surviving element of oligarchy remained in the preponderant place assigned to the five great Powers in the Security Council and was clinched by the device of the veto; these were concessions to a sense of realism and the necessity of recognising the actual condition of things and the results of the second great war and could not perhaps have been avoided, but they have done more to create trouble, hamper the action and diminish the success of the new institution than anything else in its make-up or the way of action forced upon it by the world situation or the difficulties of a combined working inherent in its very structure. A too hasty or radical endeavour to get rid of these defects might lead to a crash of the whole edifice; to leave them unmodified prolongs a malaise, an absence of harmony and smooth working and a consequent discredit and a sense of limited and abortive action, cause of the wide-spread feeling of futility and regard of doubt the world at large has begun to cast on this great and necessary institution which was founded with such high hopes and without which world conditions would be infinitely worse and more dangerous, even perhaps irremediable. A third attempt, the substitution of a differently constituted body could only come if this institution collapsed as the result of a new catastrophe: if certain dubious portents fulfil their menace, it might emerge into being and might even this time be more successful because of an increased and a more general determination not to allow such a calamity to occur again; but it would be after a third cataclysmal struggle which might shake to its foundations the international structure now holding together after two upheavals with so much difficulty and unease. Yet, even in such a contingency, the intention in the working of Nature is likely to overcome the obstacles she has herself raised up and they may be got rid of once and for all. But for that it will be necessary to build, eventually at least, a true World-State without exclusions and on a principle of equality into which considerations of size and strength will not enter. These may be left to exercise whatever influence is natural to them in a well-ordered harmony of the world's peoples safeguarded by the law of a new international order. A sure justice, a fundamental equality and combination of rights and interests must be the law of this World-State and the basis of its entire edifice.

The real danger at the present second stage of the progress towards unity lies not in any faults, however serious, in the building of the United Nations' Assembly but in the division of the peoples into two camps which tend to be natural opponents and might at any moment become declared enemies irreconcilable and even their common existence incompatible. This is because the so-called Communism of Bolshevik Russia came to

birth as the result, not of a rapid evolution, but of an unprecedentedly fierce and prolonged revolution sanguinary in the extreme and created an autocratic and intolerent State system founded upon a war of classes in which all others except the proletariat were crushed out of existence, "liquidated", upon a "dictatorship of the *proletariat*" or rather of a narrow but all-powerful party system acting in its name, a Police State, and a mortal struggle with the outside world: the fierceness of this struggle generated in the minds of the organisers of the new State a fixed idea of the necessity not only of survival but of continued struggle and the spread of its domination until the new order had destroyed the old or evicted it, if not from the whole earth, yet from the greater part of it and the imposition of a new political and social gospel or its general acceptance by the world's peoples. But this condition of things might change, lose its acrimony and full consequence, as it has done to some degree with the arrival of security and the cessation of the first ferocity, bitterness and exasperation of the conflict; the most intolerant and oppressive elements of the new order might have been moderated and the sense of incompatibility or inability to live together or side by side would then have disappeared and a more secure *modus vivendi* been made possible. If much of the unease, the sense of inevitable struggle, the difficulty of mutual toleration and economic accommodation still exists, it is rather because the idea of using the ideological struggle as a means for world domination is there and keeps the nations in a position of mutual apprehension and preparation for armed defence and attack than because the coexistence of the two ideologies is impossible. If this element is eliminated, a world in which these two ideologies could live together, arrive at an economic interchange, draw closer together, need not be at all out of the question; for the world is moving towards a greater development of the principle of State control over the life of the community, and a congeries of socialistic States on the one hand, and on the other, of States co-ordinating and controlling a modified Capitalism might well come to exist side by side and develop friendly relations with each other. Even a World-State in which both could keep their own institutions and sit in a common assembly might come into being and a single world-union on this foundation would not be impossible. This development is indeed the final outcome which the foundation of the U.N.O. presupposes; for the present organisation cannot be itself final, it is only an imperfect beginning useful and necessary as a primary nucleus of that larger institution in which all the peoples of the earth can meet each other in a single international unity: the creation of a World-State is, in a movement of this kind, the one logical and inevitable ultimate outcome.

This view of the future may under present circumstances be stigmatised as a too facile optimism, but this turn of things is quite as possible as the more disastrous turn expected by the pessimists, since the cataclysm and crash of civilisation sometimes predicted by them need not at all be the result of a new war. Mankind has a habit of surviving the worst catastrophes created by its own errors or by the violent turns of Nature and it must be so if there is any meaning in its existence, if its long history and continuous survival is not the accident of a fortuitously self-organising Chance, which it must be in a purely materialistic view of the nature of the world. If man is intended to survive and carry forward the evolution of which he is at present the head and, to some extent, a half-conscious leader of its march, he must come out of his present chaotic international life and arrive at a beginning of organised united action; some kind of World-State unitary or federal, or a confederacy or a coalition he must arrive at in the end; no smaller or looser expedient would adequately serve the purpose. In that case the general thesis advanced in this book would stand justified and we can foreshadow with some confidence the main line of advance which the course of events is likely to take in at least the main trend of the future history of the human peoples.

The question now put by evolving Nature to mankind is whether its existing international system, if system it can be called, a sort of provisional order maintained with constant evolutionary or revolutionary changes cannot be replaced by a willed and thought-out fixed arrangement, a true system, eventually a real unity serving all the common interests of the earth's peoples. An original welter and chaos with its jumble of forces forming wherever it could larger or smaller masses of civilisation and order which were in danger of crumbling or being shaken to pieces by attacks from the outer chaos was the first attempt at cosmos successfully arrived at by the genius of humanity. This was finally replaced by something like an international system with the elements of what could be called international law or fixed habits of intercommunication and interchange which allowed the nations to live together in spite of antagonisms and conflicts, a security alternating with precariousness and peril and permitting of too many ugly features, however local, of oppression, bloodshed, revolt and disorder, not to speak of wars which sometimes devastated large areas of the globe. The indwelling deity who presides over the destiny of the race has raised in man's mind and heart the idea, the hope of a new order which will replace the old unsatisfactory order and substitute for it conditions of the world's life which will in the end have a reasonable chance of establishing permanent peace and well-being. This would for the first time turn

into an assured fact the ideal of human unity which, cherished by a few, seemed for so long a noble chimera; then might be created a firm ground of peace and harmony and even a free room for the realisation of the highest human dreams, for the perfectibility of the race, a perfect society, a higher upward evolution of the human soul and human nature. It is for the men of our days and, at the most, of tomorrow to give the answer. For, too long a postponement or too continued a failure will open the way to a series of increasing catastrophes which might create a too prolonged and disastrous confusion and chaos and render a solution too difficult or impossible; it might even end in something like an irremediable crash not only of the present world-civilisation but of all civilisation. A new, a difficult and uncertain beginning might have to be made in the midst of the chaos and ruin after perhaps an extermination on a large scale, and a more successful creation could be predicted only if a way was found to develop a better humanity or perhaps a greater, a superhuman race.

The central question is whether the nation, the largest natural unit which humanity has been able to create and maintain for its collective living, is also its last and ultimate unit or whether a greater aggregate can be formed which will englobe many and even most nations and finally all in its united totality. The impulse to build more largely, the push towards the creation of considerable and even very vast supranational aggregates has not been wanting; it has even been a permanent feature in the life-instincts of the race. But the form it took was the desire of a strong nation for mastery over others, permanent possession of their territories, subjugation of their peoples, exploitation of their resources: there was also an attempt at quasi-assimilation, an imposition of the culture of a dominant race and, in general, a system of absorption wholesale or as complete as possible. The Roman Empire was the classic example of this kind of endeavour, and the Graeco-Roman unity of a single way of life and culture in a vast framework of political and administrative unity was the nearest approach within the geographical limits reached by this civilisation to something one might regard as a first figure or an incomplete suggestion of a figure of human unity. Other similar attempts have been made though not on so large a scale and with a less consummate ability throughout the course of history, but nothing has endured for more than a small number of centuries. The method used was fundamentally unsound in as much as it contradicted other life-instincts which were necessary to the vitality and healthy evolution of mankind and the denial of which must end in some kind of stagnation and arrested progress. The imperial aggregate could not acquire the unconquerable vitality and power of survival of the nation-unit. The only enduring empire-units

have been in reality large nation-units which took that name like Germany and China and these were not forms of the supranational State and need not be reckoned in the history of the formation of the imperial aggregate. So, although the tendency to the creation of empire testifies to an urge in Nature towards larger unities of human life,—and we can see concealed in it a will to unite the disparate masses of humanity on a larger scale into a single coalescing or combined life-unit—it must be regarded as an unsuccessful formation without a sequel and unserviceable for any further progress in this direction. In actual fact a new attempt of world-wide domination could succeed only by a new instrumentation or under novel circumstances in englobing all the nations of the earth or persuading or forcing them into some kind of union. An ideology, a successful combination of peoples with one aim and a powerful head like Communist Russia, might have a temporary success in bringing about such an objective. But such an outcome, not very desirable in itself, would not be likely to ensure the creation of an enduring World-State. There would be tendencies, resistances, urges towards other developments which would sooner or later bring about its collapse or some revolutionary change which would mean its disappearance. Finally, any such stage would have to be overpassed; only the formation of a true World-State, either of a unitary but still elastic kind,—for a rigidly unitary State might bring about stagnation and decay of the springs of life,—or a union of free peoples could open the prospect of a sound and lasting world-order.

It is not necessary to repeat or review, except in certain directions, the considerations and conclusions set forward in this book with regard to the means and methods or the lines of divergence or successive development which the actual realisation of human unity may take. But still on some sides possibilities have arisen which call for some modification of what has been written or the conclusions arrived at in these chapters. It had been concluded, for instance, that there was no likelihood of the conquest and unification of the world by a single dominant people or empire. This is no longer altogether so certain, for we have just had to admit the possibility of such an attempt under certain circumstances. A dominant Power may be able to group round itself strong allies subordinated to it but still considerable in strength and resources and throw them into a world struggle with other Powers and peoples. This possibility would be increased if the dominating Power managed to procure, even if only for the time being, a monopoly of an overwhelming superiority in the use of some of the tremendous means of aggressive military action which Science has set out to discover and effectively utilise. The terror of destruction and even of large scale extermination created by these ominous discoveries may bring

about a will in the governments and peoples to ban and prevent the military use of these inventions, but, so long as the nature of mankind has not changed, this prevention must remain uncertain and precarious and an unscrupulous ambition may even get by it a chance of secrecy and surprise and the utilisation of a decisive moment which might conceivably give it victory and it might risk the tremendous chance. It may be argued that the history of the last war runs counter to this possibility, for in conditions not quite realising but approximating to such a combination of circumstances the aggressive Powers failed in their attempt and underwent the disastrous consequences of a terrible defeat. But after all, they came for a time within a hair's breadth of success and there might not be the same good fortune for the world in some later and more sagaciously conducted and organised adventure. At least, the possibility has to be noted and guarded against by those who have the power of prevention and the welfare of the race in their charge.

One of the possibilities suggested at the time was the growth of continental agglomerates, a united Europe, some kind of a combine of the peoples of the American continent under the leadership of the United States, even possibly in the resurgence of Asia and its drive towards independence from the dominance of the European peoples, a drawing together for self-defensive combination of the nations of this continent; such an eventuality of large continental combinations might even be a stage in the final formation of a world-union. This possibility has tended to take shape to a certain extent with a celerity that could not then be anticipated. In the two American continents it has actually assumed a predominating and practical form, though not in its totality. The idea of a United States of Europe has also actually taken shape and is assuming a formal existence, but is not yet able to develop into a completed and fully realised possibility because of the antagonism based on conflicting ideologies which cuts off from each other Russia and her satellites behind their iron curtain and Western Europe. This separation has gone so far that it is difficult to envisage its cessation at any foreseeable time in a predictable future. Under other circumstances a tendency towards such combinations might have created the apprehension of huge continental clashes such as the collision, at one time imagined as possible, between a resurgent Asia and the Occident. The acceptance by Europe and America of the Asiatic resurgence and the eventual total liberation of the Oriental peoples, as also the downfall of Japan which figured at one time and indeed actually presented itself to the world as the liberator and leader of a free Asia against the domination of the West, have removed this dangerous possibility. Here again, as elsewhere, the actual danger presents itself rather as a clash between two opposing ideologies,

one led by Russia and Red China and trying to impose the Communistic extreme partly by military and partly by forceful political means on a reluctant or at least an infected but not altogether willing Asia and Europe, and on the other side a combination of peoples, partly capitalist, partly moderate socialist who still cling with some attachment to the idea of liberty, —to freedom of thought and some remnant of the free life of the individual. In America there seems to be a push, especially in the Latin peoples, towards a rather intolerant completeness of the Americanisation of the whole continent and the adjacent islands, a sort of extended Monroe Doctrine, which might create friction with the European Powers still holding possessions in the northern part of the continent. But this could only generate minor difficulties and disagreements and not the possibility of any serious collision, a case perhaps for arbitration or arrangement by the U.N.O., not any more serious consequence. In Asia a more perilous situation has arisen, standing sharply across the way to any possibility of a continental unity of the peoples of this part of the world in the emergence of Communist China. This creates a gigantic bloc which could easily englobe the whole of Northern Asia in a combination between two enormous Communist Powers, Russia and China, and would overshadow with a threat of absorption South-Western Asia and Tibet and might be pushed to overrun all up to the whole frontier of India, menacing her security and that of Western Asia with the possibility of an invasion and an overrunning and subjection by penetration or even by overwhelming military force to an unwanted ideology, political and social institutions and dominance of this militant mass of Communism whose push might easily prove irresistible. In any case the continent would be divided between two huge blocs which might enter into active mutual opposition and the possibility of a stupendous world-conflict would arise dwarfing anything previously experienced: the possibility of any world-union might, even without any actual outbreak of hostilities, be indefinitely postponed by the incompatibility of interests and ideologies on a scale which would render their inclusion in a single body hardly realisable. The possibility of a coming into being of three or four continental unions, which might subsequently coalesce into a single unity, would then be very remote and, except after a stupendous conflict, hardly feasible.

At one time it was possible to regard as an eventual possibility the extension of Socialism to all the nations; an international unity could then have been created by its innate tendencies which turned naturally towards an overcoming of the dividing force of the nation-idea with its separatism and its turn towards competitions and rivalries often culminating in open

strife; this could have been regarded as the natural road and could have turned in fact into the eventual way towards world-union. But, in the first place, Socialism has under certain stresses proved to be by no means immune against infection by the dividing national spirit and its international tendency might not survive its coming into power in separate national States and a resulting inheritance of competing national interests and necessities: the old spirit might very well survive in the new socialist bodies. But also there might not be or not for a long time to come an inevitable tide of the spread of Socialism to all the peoples of the earth: other forces might arise which would dispute what seemed at one time and perhaps still seems the most likely outcome of existing world tendencies; the conflict between Communism and the less extreme socialistic idea which still respects the principle of liberty, even though a restricted liberty, and the freedom of conscience of thought, of personality of the individual, if this difference perpetuated itself, might create a serious difficulty in the formation of a World-State. It would not be easy to build a constitution, a harmonised State-law and practice in which any modicum of genuine freedom for the individual or any continued existence of him except as a cell in the working of a rigidly determined automatism of the body of the collectivist State or a part of a machine would be possible or conceivable. It is not that the principle of Communism necessitates any such results or that its system must lead to a termite civilisation or the suppression of the individual; it could well be, on the contrary, a means at once of the fulfilment of the individual and the perfect harmony of a collective being. The already developed systems which go by the name are not really Communism but constructions of an inordinately rigid State Socialism. But Socialism itself might well develop away from the Marxist groove and evolve less rigid modes; a co-operative Socialism, for instance, without any bureaucratic rigour of a coercive administration, of a Police State, might one day come into existence, but the generalisation of Socialism throughout the world is not under existing circumstances easily foreseeable, hardly even a predominant possibility: in spite of certain possibilities or tendencies created by recent events in the Far East, a division of the earth between the two systems, capitalistic and socialistic, seems for the present a more likely issue. In America the attachment to individualism and the capitalistic system of society and a strong antagonism not only to Communism but to even a moderate Socialism remains complete and one can foresee little possibility of any abatement in its intensity. The extreme success of Communism creeping over the continents of the Old World which we have had to envisage as a possibility, is yet, if we consider existing circumstances and the balance of opposing Powers,

highly improbable and, even if it occurred, some accommodation would still be necessary, unless one of the two forces gained an overwhelming eventual victory over its opponent. A successful accommodation would demand the creation of a body in which all questions of possible dispute could be solved as they arose without any breaking out of open conflict, and this would be a successor of the League of Nations and the U.N.O. and move in the same direction. As Russia and America, in spite of the constant opposition of policy and ideology, have avoided so far any step that would make the preservation of the U.N.O. too difficult or impossible, this third body would be preserved by the same necessity or imperative utility of its continued existence. The same forces would work in the same direction and a creation of an effective world-union would still be possible; in the end the mass of general needs of the race and its need of self-preservation could well be relied on to make it inevitable.

There is nothing then in the development of events since the establishment of the United Nations' Organisation, in the sequel to the great initiation at San Francisco of the decisive step towards the creation of a world-body which might end in the establishment of a true world-unity, that need discourage us in the expectation of an ultimate success of this great enterprise. There are dangers and difficulties, there can be an apprehension of conflicts, even of colossal conflicts that might jeopardise the future, but total failure need not be envisaged unless we are disposed to predict the failure of the race. The thesis we have undertaken to establish of the drive of Nature towards larger agglomerations and the final establishment of the largest of all and the ultimate union of the world's peoples still remains unaltered: this is evidently the line which the future of the human race demands and which conflicts and perturbations, however immense, may delay, even as they may modify greatly the forms it now promises to take, but are not likely to prevent; for a general destruction would be the only alternative destiny of mankind. But such a destruction, whatever the catastrophic possibilities balancing the almost certain beneficial results, hardly limitable in their extent, of the recent discoveries and inventions of Science, has every chance of being as chimerical as any early expectation of final peace and felicity or a perfected society of the human peoples. We may rely, if on nothing else, on the evolutionary urge and, if on no other greater hidden Power, on the manifest working and drift or intention in the World-Energy we call Nature to carry mankind at least as far as the necessary next step to be taken, a self-preserving next step: for the necessity is there, at least some general recognition of it has been achieved and of the thing to which it must eventually lead the idea has been born and the

body of it is already calling for its creation. We have indicated in this book the conditions, possibilities, forms which this new creation may take and those which seem to be most desirable without dogmatising or giving prominence to personal opinion; an impartial consideration of the forces that work and the results that are likely to ensue was the object of this study. The rest will depend on the intellectual and moral capacity of humanity to carry out what is evidently now the one thing needful.

We conclude then that in the conditions of the world at present, even taking into consideration its most disparaging features and dangerous possibilities, there is nothing that need alter the view we have taken of the necessity and inevitability of some kind of world-union; the drive of Nature, the compulsion of circumstances and the present and future need of mankind make it inevitable. The general conclusions we have arrived at will stand and the consideration of the modalities and possible forms or lines of alternative or successive development it may take. The ultimate result must be the formation of a World-State and the most desirable form of it would be a federation of free nationalities in which all subjection or forced inequality and subordination of one to another would have disappeared and, though some might preserve a greater natural influence, all would have an equal status. A confederacy would give the greatest freedom to the nations constituting the World-State, but this might give too much room for fissiparous or centrifugal tendencies to operate; a federal order would then be the most desirable. All else would be determined by the course of events and by general agreement or the shape given by the ideas and necessities that may grow up in the future. A world-union of this kind would have the greatest chances of long survival or permanent existence. This is a mutable world and uncertainties and dangers might assail or trouble for a time; the formed structure might be subjected to revolutionary tendencies as new ideas and forces emerged and produced their effect on the general mind of humanity but the essential step would have been taken and the future of the race assured or at least the present era overpassed in which it is threatened and disturbed by unsolved needs and difficulties, precarious conditions, immense upheavals, huge and sanguinary world-wide conflicts and the threat of others to come. The ideal of human unity would be no longer an unfulfilled ideal but an accomplished fact and its preservation given into the charge of the united human peoples. Its future destiny would lie on the knees of the gods and, if the gods have a use for the continued existence of the race, may be left to lie there safe.

THE MOTHER ON YOGIC ACTION*

I

THERE are four attitudes possible towards action in the spiritual life, and all of them have important bearings on life. The first is an attitude of rejection; the second, of qualified rejection; the third of ethical acceptance, and the fourth of divine utilization. These are the fundamental attitudes, which not only colour the spiritual life in their distinctive ways, but also condition its course and consummation.

The first attitude is of sheer rejection of all action, so far as that is practicable in life. It pertains to the exclusive way of abstractive knowledge or love, which proceeds by a categoric renunciation of all secular relations, obligations and values. It looks down upon action as distracting and impeding, and tolerates only that much of it as is indispensable to the maintenance of the body. This is the way of extreme asceticism advocated and preached by some of the schools of Vedanta, Buddhism and Jainism. It exerts a positively discouraging and withering effect on life in the world.

The second attitude of qualified rejection is of a much wider applicability. The Vedanta as interpreted by Shankar, the catholic forms of Mahayan Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity accept action as a preliminary means of purification. Certain prescribed actions, calculated to calm the mind of the neophyte and help the growth of disinterestedness and concentration, are enjoined in the beginning and continued, as a social utility or as an example to others, even through the later stages of progress. But the final aim is a release from all action into an extra-cosmic, immobile peace or silence.

The third attitude is that of ethical acceptance, in which action is not rejected, but accepted, in the beginning as a means of purification and preparation, and later as a medium of ethico-spiritual self-expression. Through it one pours out into the world something of the moral purity, freedom, power, love and compassion which grow in the being as a result of accumulating spiritual realizations. This is a derivative growth or a reflex of the spiritual progress, and not a direct dynamization of the powers of the Spirit. Most spiritual seekers seem to be quite satisfied with it. An authentic and abiding experience of the Absolute within and a constant

* Based on *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*.

outflowing of love and light and peace and bliss from the instrumental being seems to be considered a summit attainment, even by most of the greatest of mystics. There may be, in this state, an intermittent or steady perception of a universal or transcendental Will behind the shifting waves of one's individual nature, but usually it is not accompanied by any clear knowledge of the why and the how of its working. A veil still remains, however thinned, between the shining harvest reaped within and its diminished transmission without: the higher values are rendered into cleansed lower terms. The supreme knowledge lacks which could dissipate the veil and integrate the inner and the outer, and the supreme power which could transform the instrumental being into a flawless vehicle of the Vast.

A seeker of the transcendent Light does not bother himself whether or not Life has an inherent right to possess and be possessed by that Light and express it in its own, but divinely transmuted, terms. He does not recognize any claim of life upon himself, but is content if it makes itself transparent enough to reflect something of the glow and sublimity of the Spirit.

This attitude has a great humanitarian value, and is productive of immense cultural progress—religious, ethical, aesthetic, literary, etc. The Maurya and Gupta periods of Indian culture were a material flowering of this attitude. Their abounding vitality and creative gusto were directly derived from the preceding burst of spiritual achievements which gave to them a religio-ethical stamp. But however great and splendid the action welling out of this attitude, however beneficial and elevating to human society, it is not the direct action of God in man, the immediate, unhindered fulfilment of His Will upon earth.

The fourth attitude is one of divine utilization of all action. Here action is not accepted on sufferance nor are its natural defects and drawbacks looked on with a high indifference, but all action is welcomed and embraced, provided it is not prejudicial to one's spiritual progress, first as a potent, indispensable means of self-surrender and liberation, and next as a transformed medium for the manifestation of the Divine and the fulfilment of His Will. This attitude is hardly met with among spiritual seekers of the traditional paths, because it is based upon a comprehensiveness of vision and an integrality of aspiration which have been almost lost to the post-Upanishadic spiritual culture in India. The Nihilism of the Buddhists and the Illusionism of the school of Shankar split the ancient amplitude and harmony and narrowed down the spiritual urge to a few trenchant simplicities. The Vedic and the Upanishadic mystics did not divide life into the spiritual and the

secular, but viewed it whole and endeavoured to render it, in its entirety, a manifesting instrument of the supreme Light. Nothing was repressed or renounced, but all was illumined and transmuted to serve the Cosmic Will.

This Cosmic Will or the self-fulfilling Will of the Eternal operating in Time and Space, is the teleological secret and source of all action, collective and individual. To know this Will by inner identity and fulfil it through our integral being, perfectly attuned to its working, is the aim of Yogic action; and we shall presently see how the Mother throws a flood of light upon the complexity of its nature, process and utility.

I make no apology to reproduce in full the Mother's Prayer of the 28th November, 1912:—

“The outer life, the activity of each day and each moment, is it not the indispensable complement of our hours of meditation and contemplation? And is not the proportion of time given to each the exact image of the proportion which exists between the amount of effort to be made for the preparation and the realization? For, meditation, contemplation, Union is the result obtained—the flower that blooms; the daily activity is the anvil on which all the elements must pass and re-pass in order to be purified, refined, made supple and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them. All these elements must be thus passed one after the other through the crucible before outer activity becomes needless for the integral development. Then is this activity turned into the means to manifest Thee so as to awaken the other centres of consciousness to the same dual work of the forge and the illumination. Therefore are pride and satisfaction with oneself the worst of all obstacles. Very modestly we must take advantage of all the minute opportunities offered to knead and purify some of the innumerable elements, to make them supple, to make them impersonal, to teach them forgetfulness of self and abnegation and devotion and kindness and gentleness; and when all these modes of being have become habitual to them, then are they ready to participate in the Contemplation, and to identify themselves with Thee in the supreme Concentration. That is why it seems to me that the work must be long and slow even for the best, and that striking conversions cannot be integral. They change the orientation of the being, they put it definitively on the straight path; but truly to attain the goal, none can escape the need of innumerable experiences of every kind and every instant.

O Supreme Master, who shinest in my being and each thing, let Thy Light be manifest and the reign of Thy Peace come for all.”

Three momentous truths of far-reaching consequence emerge from this Prayer which contains the whole gospel of Yogic action. 1) Contemplation, supreme Concentration or Union—the Mother uses these terms almost as synonyms—is not only the meeting of the liberated part of our being, our soul, but of our whole being—soul and nature—with the supreme Reality. 2) Action of every day and of every instant is indispensable for the integral development of our being and the realization of the integral union, which is not possible without the long, chequered discipline of consecrated action. 3) Action continues even after the integral development, but only to manifest the Divine and to awaken other centres of consciousness, i.e. other individuals, to the same “dual work of the forge and the illumination.”

Let us elaborate and try to elucidate these truths, one after another, in order to make them definite and clear to our aspiring intelligence.

1) Union is commonly understood to be an ecstatic identification of the most spiritually developed part of our consciousness with the Divine. It is usually effected by an act of abstractive thought, the most spiritualized part of our consciousness withdrawing from the movements of Nature (trance) and plunging in the infinity of the Spirit. But this means the sundering of a part from the whole. The Mother does not regard it as integral union. According to her, union is a fusion and identification of the whole consciousness of man—physical, vital, mental and spiritual—with the Supreme, who is at once the All and the Beyond-All. In this union, trance is not indispensable; in fact, it is ultimately dispensed with, the whole consciousness enjoying an abysmal silence in the midst of the most stupendous action. Acting, thinking, feeling, sleeping—in all states of being and all modes of its operation—one abides in a perfect union and identification with the Divine. As the Divine has not to abrogate or annul his waking self to realize His transcendent immobility or forfeit His luminous silence and stillness to engage in world-action, so the individual who has realized an integral union with Him, has not to labour under any such disabling dichotomy and oscillate between peaceful passivity and agitated activity. An integral union denotes a union in all the four states of our being at one and the same time—Jagrat (waking state), Swapna (dream state), Sushupti (massed sleep-state) and Turiya (transcendent state). It is to become absolutely one with the Absolute, but not by self-annihilation or tranced merger. If we refer to the state of the detached Purusha, witnessing the works of Nature but not participating in them, as described in the Gita, we shall more easily understand how the individual consciousness, widened beyond all ego-moulds and revelling in the infinity of the Eternal who is at once

in Time and beyond Time, can see all the movements of its nature initiated, guided and consummated by the Divine, in whom it now permanently lives, moves and has its being.

2) But, paradoxical though it may seem, the integral union cannot be realized without Yogic action. We must take special note of this truth, lest in the impatient fervour of our devotion, or the vertiginous flight of our Godward thought, we let ourselves drift away from action and seal for ever the highest and widest fulfilment of our terrestrial destiny. Action is indispensable in this Yoga of integral union. The Mother calls it preparation or the work of the forge. It is only through action that each part of our being, each fibre of our subjective and objective personality can be purified, refined, made supple, unegoistic, self-abnegating and impersonal. There is a nuclear formation of the ego in each element of our being, which has to be broken up, and the elements have to be released into a dynamic impersonality. But if we eschew action, we shall find ourselves eschewing the essential preparation; and the myriad elements of our nature, deprived of their natural play and process of purification and development, will either lie supinely dormant or chafe in resentful repression—they can never be transformed and divinely dynamic.

It was the renunciation of action under the fateful spell of Buddhism and illusionistic Vedantism that atrophied the veins and arteries of the Indian society and caused its eventual decay and subjection to foreign domination. A religion or spirituality that disdains life and discourages its natural growth and colourful self-expression, discounts, in effect, the Will of God in creation and is doomed to wither out of existence. It may have its fulfilment in some timeless Otherwhere, but none here, in the eternal march of Time.

The great gift of the West to the culture of modern humanity is the insistent sense of the significance of Life and its irresistible purpose in the material world. But this purpose cannot be read on the surface of its ceaseless flux; it is hidden in its depths and can be known only by the light of the Spirit and fulfilled only by its all-achieving Power. Science skims the surface of life and fails to fathom its depths and discover its goal. How the human life can be explored, expanded, purified and transfigured by Yoga and, married to the supreme Light, become its blissful manifesting medium upon earth, is what the Mother teaches in the present Prayer. The union with the supreme Reality which will illumine and transform life and make it divinely creative, cannot be achieved, the Mother insists, without "action of every kind and of every instant". This teaching coincides with the Gita's gospel of work except for the enthralling glimpse it affords of the glory

of the final achievement—the divinization of the whole human nature and the revelation of Sachchidananda through it. By action is the soul bound to ignorance and suffering, and by action is it to be freed. The actions performed for the sake of oneself, for the satisfaction of one's egoistic desires and for personal profit, hem in and heave the consciousness with their reactions and results and emphasize the separateness of the individual from the universal. It is only when actions are stripped of desires and turned Godwards, that they become a powerful liberating force and a sure means of progressive self-transcendence. Each action, offered to the Infinite and the Eternal, is a step forward towards it and the unravelling of one of the million knots that attach man to ignorance and death. Rejection of action, therefore, is a wilful postponement of the solution of the central problem of life, and cannot effect the release of the embodied being of man from Nature's yoke, however high his detached soul may soar in its unclamped freedom. That which binds must unbind, that which veils must be the agent of the supreme unveiling. "Action cleaves not to man" says one of the Upanishads, but it must be an action scrupulously performed in the spirit of sacrifice, as the Gita definitely lays it down. "The daily activity is the anvil on which all the elements must pass and re-pass in order to be purified, refined, made supple and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them. All these elements must be thus passed one after the other through the crucible" (of action). These words imply not only a consecration and Godward orientation of all actions, but their utilization in the transformation of the numberless elements of our nature which have a right, as much as the naked soul, to the bliss of the divine union. It is only in the course of action that one meets with opposition, unmerited calumny, deceit and dishonesty on the part of those with whom one deals, or praise and flattery and generous rewards; and one can watch one's various reactions to these outer touches—anger and lust and greed and vanity and resentment and envy and egoistic elation and gratification—and offer them to the divine Force for the transformation of their perverted energies and their conversion into their spiritual counterparts. How else can the weak and obscure life of *homo sapiens* change into an epiphany of Light and Force, once the possibility of such a radical change is admitted? Renunciation of work spells a betrayal of God's intention in the world and a turning of one's back upon the highest perfection of one's terrestrial existence.

3) The third truth the Mother brings out in the Prayer is the dual nature of Yogic action—its nature as a means of purification and preparation for divine union, and as a means of manifestation of the divine splendours. When all the elements of one's nature have been radically cured and converted

by a long discipline of consecrated action, then one stands independent of all action, it ceases to be indispensable; but still it goes on, even as life goes on, as the world goes on, as a vehicle of divine revelation and a means of awakening other human beings to the great "dual work of the forge and the illumination." The liberated soul in a liberated, luminous nature—this is exactly what Sri Aurobindo means by the term "Jivanmukta"—works on in the world in an immortalized divine body or in several divine bodies in succession, if that be God's Will, securely stationed in the Divine and moved by His Force alone.

It is a long, a very long and laborious discipline, this of Yogic action, demanding constant vigilance and an integral, ungrudging surrender to the divine Force; and a sudden, "striking conversion cannot be integral." In order to reach the goal which is nothing short of a divinization of the whole being in all its states of consciousness and modes of operation, "none can escape the need of innumerable experiences of every kind and every instant." But the goal, the great, glorious goal has magnetized the soul of humanity, and whatever the difficulties of the path, whatever the resistance in the nature and the buffet and drag of tradition, humanity cannot rest till it has been attained.

RISHABHCHAND

THE POSITIVE APPROACH TO SPIRITUALITY*

III

IN the annals of human experience we find that there are records of a vaster more infinite Reality than that Beyond which has appeared to us as the known—and extensively unknown—Cosmic existence. Such is the transcendent Beyond—the pure Spirit-in-itself—which is a knowledge more familiar to Eastern spirituality than to the pattern and outlook of a naturalistic West. It was this larger realisation of a lofty luminous Reality beyond the universe, which at a certain stage of India's development had become the chief central aim of her endeavours, and which had inevitably culminated in the venerated figure of the Sannyasin,—that is, one who has entirely renounced all worldly ties and attachments to become rather the lone pursuer of Spirit for its own sake. It was a perilous line of endeavour, however, for even though India had thus amassed untold treasures of the Spirit, there was for centuries the wide-spread abandon of all material progress, which had consequently put upon her that disconcerting cloak of an outer decay and neglect. And thus we find that as in the materialism of the West where the agnostic had shut out all reality save the physical one, so at the other extreme the Sannyasin aimed to cut off all entanglements with worldly life and its material base.

It is clear that such an immense leap into the Beyond could only be made at the expense of neglecting the material life, as well as of all those intermediary steps which make up the dynamic Cosmic Reality, and which also mark out for man the course of his future evolutionary progress. But supported by pure logical thought, the justification for this extreme flight to the Spirit is as equally tenable as that for the utter plunge into Matter. It is more understandable, therefore, that during the long period of human development when the rational intellect is largely the guiding factor of man, there should result that large global bifurcation into the two separate lines of progress which culminated in agnosticism on the one hand and in illusionism on the other. And perhaps also this division had to take place in order to test out completely and to the full the inner truths of each path. In the present trends of knowledge, however, there are signs of a more all-embracing and integral movement, with its promise of a greater wholeness.

* Based on "The Life Divine."

Moreover modern thought, as opposed to that of the past, has a firmer sensorial link with Matter, and is thus more securely grounded and rooted to earth for this fuller growth,—even to the supra-cosmic Heights. It rests, however, with modern man himself to fully recognise and become conscious of this integral possibility; for as yet there is only a half-conscious fumbling, an infantile groping on the lower levels, with only here and there some vague foreboding of other-world realities. It is apparent that humanity is almost unaware of or indifferent to the goal to which it is being drawn, and consequently there is all the blind resistance to this upward pull.

Although modern thought has made some tentative beginnings in the direction of investigating that growing mass of evidence derived from subliminal phenomena and the associated experiences centred around extra-sensory perception, these infant sciences are still looked upon as abnormalities by the main body of scientific opinion, and consequently they are receiving but scant recognition in present-day research. In this connection we can see how the state of trance, for instance, which has come to be associated with these and other para-normal experiences, is so grossly misunderstood. Whereas the physical trance is regarded mainly as an abnormal or pathological condition, it is rather an intermediate and temporary phenomenon, induced by the sudden cessation of the physical senses and the consequent emergence of subtle ones to the surface consciousness. For when the outer bodily senses are thus withdrawn, there intervenes a state of physical quietude which permits the inner faculties to extend and enlarge. Ultimately, however, as the Enlightened of all times have shown us, we can be fully alive in the physical activity—though with the mind perfectly stilled—and yet intensely aware of and even moving in and through other world realities. For these worlds beyond are not so remotely separate from the physical universe, but are intimately related with its present destiny and progress, and even exert an influence on the material plane which is as yet all too little known and correctly understood by modern thought.

Yet the occult worlds, though they thus enter significantly into human life and experience, are not the ends nor are they the dominant factor of existence, but rather they form an integral part of the extensive field of action of an observing Consciousness which stands beyond this entire activity that constitutes the Cosmos. For it has been revealed from earliest times, that beyond all cosmic movement there is an ultimate Witness. And we can see also that this corresponds in the outer worlds to our inner experience of a passive observer which stands behind and aloof from the action-partaking part of the individual being. It was the Cosmic Witness, however,

which the ancients knew to be the true objective reality of Consciousness. For Consciousness was seen to be not merely the limited outlook and possession of the individual being, but rather an all-pervading Existence which is supra-cosmic as well as the inherent cosmic Principle, and of which the individual consciousness is itself but a concentration. From this standpoint it was shown that the Conscious Witness is in fact the true centre and pivot of all cosmic action, and is thus the real source and origin, the very Creator or Matrix from which the whole cosmic movement has issued. Cosmos itself is therefore the external and active existence of that Witness. It was only in later centuries of Indian spiritual thought, through an exclusively idealistic tendency, that the Witness became the all-existent factor, and the Creation but a mirage or a transient illusion of It. Through a similar exclusiveness and one-sided emphasis we see how materialism had fallen into the other extreme conception,—that the Activity or the Creation is the sole and ultimate Real, and the Creator a non-existence. It is interesting to note, however, that in some recent scientifically founded thought, there has appeared the confirmation of an ultimate detached observer within the self, and significantly enough, this innermost witness is shown to be linked with the larger verities of Immortality and Timelessness. From such approach it becomes more possible for the greater Truth of a detached Cosmic Witness, conjoined with an equally real Cosmos, to be more readily grasped by the modern world.

In the idealistic pattern of thought, however, we can see that it was inevitable from the limited outlook which had thus developed, with its conception of a sole-existent and extra-cosmic Witness, that this earthly life should have been made merely an illusion which had to work itself out finally, in some repetitively mechanical or spiral-like way. And consequently the highest aim for this line of endeavour became the seeking for an ultimate refuge in the absolute Beyond, a final self-negating liberation from all fleshly bondage. The outlook of materialistic thought, which we really find to be complementary rather than opposed to the idealistic tradition, had also come to regard the individual's life on earth as a transitory appearance on the world stage, though the emphasis in this case was on the outer present life rather than on some future state of existence. Therefore the highest practical aim of the materialist world could only reach the ethical one,—that of rendering some selfless service to humanity as perhaps the greatest useful endeavour in an otherwise meaningless or wholly self-centered life. In both these extremes of thought, however, we find that their limited and pessimistic conclusions, particularly regarding the destiny of the individual's life, cannot readily be accepted by the modern

mind as a satisfying and fundamental solution of existence; nor can they be considered to be a comprehensive affirmation of the All, since both conclusions lead to the ultimate elimination and negation of the dynamic centres of the Divine Manifestation, which are the individual entities. It is clear therefore that a wider approach than that attempted by purely intellectual endeavour is now needed, if we are to attain to that comprehensive outlook which can grasp the truth both of materialism as well as of idealism as the basis of a fuller affirmation. It has been shown, however, in endeavours of the past, that by detaching oneself and rising beyond logical thought, we are able to attain to a consciousness above that governed by the sense-mind and the ego. In this way we can enter intimately into the all-pervasive Cosmic Consciousness which, we have seen, is the real keystone of man's higher development. For in that larger awareness we begin to see that even the extreme lines of thought and development emerge from and are in fact branches of a common root and centre.

Cosmic Consciousness, however, if it is to become a living reality in the world and not merely a theoretical speculation, must be seized, entered into and lived in in the same way that the ancient Seers immersed themselves and lived in it; though for the modern world it must become a more permanent and normal possession of man, the very basis of his own enlargement. In order to achieve this wider vision, therefore, we must in a progressive way be able to break through the limitation of the ego-centre, and to identify ourselves more and more completely with the secret innermost Self which is hidden in all things. It is however the ego in man—that dividing and separative centre of his being—which is the chief stumbling-block in the way of his further advancement. For the ego has grown to be the central dominant factor of his nature, in which it is deeply rooted, so that it now requires an internal revolution to displace its sovereignty, a complete turn and change of attitude,—similar in many ways to the decisive change which took place in man's external cosmological outlook when he began to realise that the earth is not the real centre of the solar and planetary motions. But even through a broadening and deepening of knowledge we can, either from the direct or from the recorded experiences of those who have already plumbed the potentialities of the cosmic consciousness, considerably extend our inner awareness. From them we learn that there are two states or phases through which we can enter into this wider consciousness. We either become aware of the one Being of which Matter, Life and Mind are the multiple emanations,—and even beyond Mind the higher entity of Supermind,—which together form the subliminal layers or worlds

of existence of the larger cosmic Reality. Or plunging directly into these worlds we become unified with the Multiplicity in all its inner details, and can thus enter even into the lives and minds of other beings than our own. But having thus become aware of these two phases as separate aspects of approach—as the way of Being on the one hand, and as the way of Consciousness on the other—we also begin to realise that they are not really separate entities of Cosmos, as it appears at first to our dividing mind, but that they are the two sides—the largeness of the One, and the detail of the Many—through which the whole Cosmic Reality is revealed to us. Thus in that wider awareness we begin to see that all cosmic Being is essentially an embodiment of Consciousness, and that pure Consciousness is itself a Being or Existence, though completely aloof from Its cosmic action. And even through all their infinite formations and statuses, however lofty or lowly, Consciousness cannot be separated from Being, nor can Being be entirely excluded from Consciousness. Otherwise the reality of the world divorced from Consciousness would naturally fall into that narrow conception of a mere mechanical and aimless existence; and the reality of the Transcendence devoid of inherent Being would make of Creation an inevitable unreality and an illusion. It is only when we widen our seeing beyond the present habitual outlook, that we realise in a more integral way the infinite and intimate inter-relationship of an all-conscient, all-existent Reality which is at once cosmic and extra-cosmic.

Beyond the Cosmos, therefore, we look to the vastness of a world-transcending Consciousness, whose infinite Perfection the ancients had already discerned and unveiled. There, they had revealed, lies the pure Spirit itself, the Divine Ground of all existence; and the universe is but the utter dependency of that supernal Vast. But just as one can enter into and live in the Cosmic Consciousness, so it was found possible also to enter into that Transcendent Consciousness and become thereby completely detached and aloof from the universal activity and movement. It was indeed in that high and lofty vision above the worlds that the ancient Seers were able to penetrate the secrets of the larger Reality, and to realise Its relation with the Cosmos and with man. Only in a later age, while attempting to grasp the immensity of the Transcendence before the horizon of humanity had widened sufficiently to embrace the wholeness of it, did man's mind become overwhelmed and transfixed by its first impress and contact with the pure infinite Calm of that apparently inactive Spirit. For in that transfixed state mind could seize nothing but the face of the Transcendence,—the Calm, the Stillness and the utter Silence of that luminous translucent Sea. While it was even thus the highest grasp of the human intellect—as

opposed to a higher intuitive seeing—it was also a hypnotic charm which held the mind of man spell-bound for centuries; and it became the final goal, the supreme All of a host of religious seekers who had come within the orbit of its dazzling light. Chiefly fostered and spread by Buddhistic teaching this powerful realisation of a pure Transcendence had widely gripped the Eastern world; and during a long medieval era of spiritual endeavour it had become the main characteristic dominating Indian life and thought. It was largely due to the initial reaction of a dynamic mind in face of that static transfixed poise, that modern man has been unable to see beyond the unprogressive fixity which came to symbolise Indian spiritual thought to the world. And thus a Transcendence which appeared to be merely a fantasy and the root of all worldly illusion has been widely rejected by the modern age. Yet actual experience reveals that the Transcendence holds in itself the supreme Truth of the Divine Reality. And it is interesting to note that the experience of a momentary though abiding sense of Timelessness is in fact beginning to appear in more recent writings, which not only indicates the reality of this transcendent consciousness to the modern mind, but also gives a clue to the direction in which the true comprehensive Reality can be found.

But to see the Divine even in His detached unstained Purity is itself a limitation, unless at the same time we see Him also in the world. For the very act of Creation was the bringing down, in successive and progressive steps, of that pure infinite Consciousness into a finite material mould,—eternal Spirit to become inert Matter. And the Creator, Who is even now forming and shaping the world, forcing down a greater entity than Mind into this all resistant earthly field, not only embraces and sustains the universe, but has also entered through His very Nature into the stuff of Creation, down to the minutest particle of it. It is thus that we can say that Nature is really a disguised Godhead, and that man, the highest element in the terrestrial emergence, is in truth potential God. It is these bold and lofty truths, revealed by the Enlightened of the world, that the modern seeking mind has yet to recognise and to bring to fulfilment.

N. PEARSON

LIGHTS ON THE FUNDAMENTALS*

(Continued from the last issue)

NEW CREATION

61-62. The Supreme is radiant even in the finite for the full blossoming, by His inherent Tapas which upholds the existence of Creation, causes the measuring (of the Measureless) and sustains the limitless Self in limitation by a portion of Himself for world-enjoyment.¹

Now we have come to the end of the treatise and this is the concluding part in which is summed up all that has been stated in the earlier sections. Here in this double couplet, the efficient cause and the purpose of creation are succinctly stated and this is a reiteration of what was stated in the first section, especially in verses 13, 16 and 20. Now the question how the creation comes to be has been discussed and it is settled that Tapas or Chit-Shakti of Ishwara is the cause of creation and that is natural to him. The low idea and the vulgar fancy that the Creator created by a fiat or from desire akin to human want has been dismissed with reasonableness and appropriate citations from sacred texts. To release the world-being from his own being is natural to Ishwara in view of the Bliss-nature of the Supreme Sat-Chit-Ananda. This well understood and granted, there does not arise the question why there should be creation at all. But still another aspect of the same question remains: is there a purpose? If there is meaning, then does it pertain to the Creator or to the created? Surely, we can not presume by any stretch of imagination to scale into the heights of the Spirit and read the intention of the Divine Lord, Creator of the universe; for the Divine Reason and Knowledge and purpose in regard to creation can be understood, as they are, by a consciousness above the human level and one with the Divine Consciousness itself. But it is no forbidden ground for man to rise to his own heights nearer the Realm of the

*तत्त्वप्रभा

नवा सृष्टिः

1 परो निसर्गसिद्धेन सर्गसद्भावधायिना ।

अपरिच्छिन्नमात्मानं तपसा मानहेतुना ॥६१॥

परिच्छिन्नमिहांशेन दधानो लोकभुक्तये ।

परिच्छेदेऽपि सम्पूर्णविकासाय विभासते ॥६२॥

spiritual consciousness and understand the Intention and *meaning* of creation in terms of the highest reasoning mind. This he is entitled to do in as much as no serious thought or action in life proceeds from him without *purpose*. The idea of purpose being natural to man, he can translate into the terms of his reasoning, the Divine Intention and purpose as perceived by mystic seers or recorded perceptions in the scriptures or as glimpsed by him in his intuitive moments. Thus the *meaning* of creation is not sought for in terms of the consciousness of the Lord, but is to be understood in human terms. What, then, is the purpose? 'For the blossoming even in the finite' is the answer. That is to say, the Divine possibilities of the finite are worked out and made to manifest. The Divine potentialities of the Infinite Self are latent in the finite and it is the revelation of the Divine Nature and infinitude hidden in the finite that is the purpose of the Limitless Self discovering itself in limitation of the finite. 'It is radiant even in the finite' shows the dynamic character of its presence. And this is worked out by Tapas otherwise called Maya, that which causes the 'measuring'. The Infinite revealing itself in the finite, the finite human working out the infinite Divine possibilities in some measure and a fuller realisation of the possibilities of the Divine in his infinitude in the apparent limitations of man—these are one and the same thing that is the meaning of creation so far as man on earth is concerned.

63. Whatever principles are manifest for ever in the fourth plane are hidden in this Earth-world of elements, in the Inconscient (Matter).¹

The self-revelation of the Infinite in the finite is a statement made in abstract terms. It is the discovery or the self-unveiling of the Divine in the human that is meant by the term as the goal of human existence on earth. But it is not a passive presence of the Divine, which is everywhere in the human as well as in the non-human, though veiled, that is sought to be revealed, though that is *sine qua non* for the expression of the unexpressed Divinity in man. It is the sublime principles that are always associated with the Divine Being, Knowledge, Power, Light and the rest that are to be unfolded in their divine splendour in the human being. And this is a dynamic power, not a realisation by man of the Divine presence alone. For this purpose, it is stated that the principles of Truth, Knowledge, Power, Light, etc. are hidden in Matter. But they are quite manifest in the fourth plane. Why the fourth plane is mentioned instead of the Eternal triple

¹ व्यक्तानि यानि तत्त्वानि तुरीये धाम्नि सन्ततम् ।

तानि गुप्तानि भूलोके जडेऽस्मिन्पाञ्चभौतिके ॥६३॥

Sat-Chit-Ananda above it is due to the fact that we are immediately concerned with the fourth, the Mahas of the Vijnana principle which is the ultimate saviour of this triple world of Ignorance even as it is its first cause. This Earth-world of Matter, the inconscient has within it folded all the higher principles of life, mind and the rest and they are to be unfolded because of their ever manifest presence in the fourth world that exerts now in a veiled manner its pressure upon the earth to yield the fruits of its labour.

64. Always, in the Mahas, the Sat-Chit-Ananda is manifest; but here in this triple world below it is by itself unmanifest, obscure to us.¹

Sat-Chit-Ananda is indeed everywhere present. But in the Cosmic Hierarchy it is in the higher heights and above the Mahas, the fourth world, and as such 'is ever manifest' in it. Or in other words, the Sat-Chit-Ananda is viewed in relation to the Cosmic Manifestation; it is the eternal uncreate triple world close to and above and harboured in the fourth, the Mahas, which is the goal for this triple world to which we belong. But this our existence is in the lower rungs of the cosmic ladder, and as such, under the grip of Ignorance, hence it is stated that the Sat-Chit-Ananda is obscure to us here, for it is not manifest as it is above in the Mahas.

65. The cause of Earth's movement is the blossoming of the hidden (principles of) life etc. Because of the entry of Life into Matter the latter became endowed with life.²

It was stated that the Sat-Chit-Ananda, the Power, Light, Knowledge and other properties native to the Higher Half, *parardha*, of the Cosmic Existence are to manifest here on Earth and that is the meaning and fruit of the Divine self-revelation in man. But the Supermind with all its properties, even a little of it does not come down in a leap upon earth. There is an order, as we have seen, in the development of creation itself from the Supreme. Step by step the higher comes to the lower and the lower under the pressure of the higher reveals and brings out the element previously hidden in it, but awakened by the coming down of its active principle and power from the plenary world high up to which it belongs. Life was already latent, *involved* in Matter; when life-force from the Life-world which is just next above it entered into it, Life appeared in Matter, Matter evolved Life.

1 अजस्रं सच्चिदानन्दं प्रकाशं महसि स्थितम् ।

अधस्त्रिलोक्यामस्माकमप्रकाशमिह स्वयम् ॥६४॥

2 भुवो गतिस्तु गुप्तानां प्राणादीनां विकासनम् ।

प्राणस्याऽन्नेऽनुप्रवेशादन्नं प्राणवदास्थितम् ॥६५॥

66. Just as the blossoming of Life from Matter is seen in the trees etc. even so the blossoming of Mind in mankind is quite (manifest) clear.¹

The first appearance of the life-principle on Earth is nothing else but the fact of the emergence of life submerged in Matter; what was there already in it, came out under the downward pressure of life from above. And this is illustrated in the vegetable kingdom. Once we know that Brahman or Sat-Chit-Ananda is omnipresent, we also understand by that omnipresence, not mere featureless, ever sleepy nothing-like presence, but the One with all the properties native to It, not as they are in the plenary home of Sat-Chit-Ananda in the upper half of the Creation, but latent and unmanifest, yet having within it the possibilities for manifesting them under suitable conditions when they are ready. This point is to be noted as a characteristic feature of Sri Aurobindo's teaching as distinct from the Vedantic dictum that all is Brahman or that It is everywhere. That its veiled presence is a sign-post for the manifestation of something of itself ultimately is not a proposition admitted or even conceived of in the other teachings, Vedantic or any other. But the Manifestation is gradual, the Divine Purusha coming down from above to meet and unite with the emerging purusha who also is divine in essence but in the conditions of the triple world of ignorance. Before such a manifestation, the higher Light and Power of the Divine Spirit in its degraded form as mind and life is to be brought out on earth, in Matter. And when it is so evolved, it retains the Matter from which it has come out, in which it is encased as it were. Just as life was present in Matter, submerged, or involved and latent as has been stated earlier, even so the mind representing the principle of Consciousness is present even in the plant life, though it does not emerge fully as it does in man. We may note in passing that it was given to an eminent Indian scientist in the early years of the century to prove experimentally that the plant life has a nervous system. His references to the 'perception part', the plant's 'power of perception', 'the feelings of plants', in the course of his scientific demonstration left no shadow of doubt in the minds of eminent scientist-observers that the plant-life is charged with consciousness of the kind suited to its nervous system. Indeed the ancients knew that plants have not merely life but a consciousness and feeling of pain and pleasure as can be gathered even from the comparatively later works like the Mahabharata or Manu Smriti. But that was part of their intuitive knowledge, not a truth arrived at by experimental

¹ अन्नाद्विकासः प्राणस्य वृक्षादौ दृश्यते यथा ।

मानुष्यके च मनसो विकासश्च तथा स्फुटः ॥६६॥

science of the kind known to our times. As Sri Aurobindo remarks: 'The ancient thinkers knew well that life and mind exist everywhere in essence and vary only in degree and manner of their emergence and functionings. All is in all and it is out of the complete involution that the complete evolution progressively appears.'

That mind in man is an emergence from life in matter points to the truth that the emergent principle sustains itself at the base on principles already evolved and organised in appropriate structure to serve as the foundation for the manifesting element to express itself and function.

67. Henceforth shall be the flowering of the Vijnana, Supermind, for us on Earth. When that is accomplished, accomplished also is the Divinity of Manu's progeny, Man.¹

Just as plant-life is a remarkable proof of Nature that life has come out of Matter and having once appeared retains its basis in matter with suitable adjustments, even so mind has come out of life and organised in living matter proceeds with its functionings of organised life initially in the animal and with an increasing self-expression and development it finds its level of higher possibilities in man.

This emergence of mind is not the last term of the gradual evolution of man, the spiritual being. For it must be noted, what is very often ignored in the religions, rather religious philosophies that man is a complex proposition. He is indeed a soul, essentially the Spirit—a modicum or shadow or reflection according to philosophical preferences, something very substantial in the core of his being. But he is not only that; he is much else, a spiritual being finding himself in a mind encased in living matter. The evolved elements of mind, life and matter are his property and sheaths, instruments for stability and action and thought. But thought is not the highest instrument or principle of the spirit's power of manifestation. The next higher principle of light, power and knowledge—called Vijnana, the Supermind—has to emerge from the highest region of the most evolved and therefore most developed mind. And this emergence of the Vijnana is not a one-sided labour, is not possible without the coming down of the Vijnana from its native plane above. And when it comes down, touches and presses upon its own element involved in the mind, the latter opens and receives and accepts it for its organisation and rule here in man when he *lives* in the material body. Thus, we can say that the Supermind is the Divine principle of action and thought; it is an instrument of the Purusha, the spiritual Being, organising

¹ विज्ञानस्य विकासः स्यादित ऊर्ध्वं भुवीह नः ।

यस्मिन्सिद्धे भवेत्सिद्धं दिव्यत्वं मनुजन्मनः ॥६७॥

itself in the human vehicle with all its instrumental faculties and at the same time transforming them to suit the new conditions in the new situation imposed on the evolving soul. Be it noted that the evolution of life and mind is strictly speaking, the evolution of the soul in plant-life or animal or human mind; it is really the evolution of the soul of which life and mind are bodies and vehicles. It is not the Divine or divinised soul, though it is divine in the sense that all existence is Brahman. It is yet to be divinised and that transformation is a natural effortless consequence of the next higher principle of supermind getting down for self-organisation in the human being. It is only then the human evolving soul recognises its identity with the Supreme Spirit above and in the act of recognition commences the change of the mental into the supramental, the human into the Divine, the mortal into the Immortal. When the Vijnana is settled and organised, then the human being, son of Manu, God the Thinker, the mental Person realises his title to get divinised, himself and along with him his triple body of matter, life and mind by dint of the Divine Organ now established, called Vijnana by the Upanishad, Supermind by Sri Aurobindo.

68. This is called the New Creation of which the evolutionary order is the passage; it could be accomplished, while man lives on earth, by the Supreme Shakti.²

This manifestation of the Vijnana hitherto latent and unmanifest of which we have so far spoken is called the New Creation; for creation of anything does not proceed from nothing, *na asato vidyate bhāvah*, and nothing comes out of nothing. It is, therefore, a new formation of what was already existent and immanent, a thorough overhauling and reconstruction of the old stuff of the triple instrument of matter, life and mind and a complete reorganisation of the whole being necessitated by the entry into it of the superior Divine Principle for the emergence of its own part, rather human counterpart, submerged portion in the lower being.

The means of this new creation is the evolutionary order and this has been stated. Such a profound change is certainly a new creation; for the Power, Light and Knowledge that the Divine Principle of Supermind brings are such that it creates a new mode of living and acting in the human being; the difference between the animal mind and the human is not less than that between the mental and supramental. Therefore it is stated that such a creation could be achieved by the supreme Shakti, the inalienable Power of the Divine Purusha. Instead of mentioning the Purusha, Shakti

¹ परिणामक्रमद्वारः स नवः सर्ग उच्यते ।

निर्वाहः परया शक्त्या भुवि जीवति मानवे ॥६८॥

is mentioned here as achieving the task. This is done to lay stress upon the principle of Female Energy who is ever in the forefront of all creation while she is backed by her own reserve and capital and yet the active presence of the Purusha. The two are one and the same Divine Truth, but at the summit of Manifestation the bifurcation takes place for the purpose of cosmic development and the fulfilment of the diverse functions in the unity of all existence. Therefore it is stated that Para Shakti can work out this creation and not human endeavour or tapasya alone.

69-70. This (work) is extract from the Teachings of Sri Aurobindo, the great sage who sees into the meaning of creation. This slender *Tattvaprabha* (Lights on the Fundamentals) was composed by Kapali; let it bring joy to the learned as the moon's digit does to the aesthetic minds.¹

These are the two concluding couplets which take the place of a brief colophon in Sanskrit. Teachings of Sri Aurobindo are based upon his *perceptions*. Hence the Sanskrit word *darshana* in the plural is used not in the sense of philosophy as in the Six Systems but in the sense of direct knowledge founded upon the seeings of truth as distinguished from speculative thought and hypothetical philosophies, religious or intellectual. The essence of these Teachings is this extract. It is slender, thin in size, *tanvi*, a term suggestive of the charm associated with a slim figure of the fair sex. It is compared to the Moon's digit that appeals to the aesthesis of refined souls. In the crescent moon the digit is luminous, but the whole lunar orb is quite perceptible. This compact work also is clear in so far as it has found expression but the whole teaching of Sri Aurobindo of which this is the essence is doubtless understandable from the arc-like sketch of this *Tattvaprabha* (Lights on the Fundamentals).²

T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

¹ अयं भगवतः श्रीमदरविन्दमहामुनेः ।

सर्गार्थदर्शिनः सारो दर्शनेभ्यः समुद्धृतः ॥६९॥

तन्वी तत्त्वप्रभा सेयं कलितेह कपालिना ।

रसिकानामिवाधेन्दुकला कुर्याद्विदां मुदम् ॥७०॥

² Largely influenced by Sri Aurobindo's writings, these verses were written somewhere between 1915 and 1917 and originally they were about 200 in number. Long afterwards a few verses were added and the rest removed in order to make it compact maintaining the structure of this small work in complete consonance with the Master's precepts and teachings. In 1939-40 Sri Aurobindo perused them, approved and gave his blessings for their printing as Appendix to the Sanskrit translation in verses of *The Four Powers of the Mother*. Since 1942, when the bare text of these Karikas, aphoristic verses was published, there has been a persistent demand for an English rendering. To meet this, 'Lights on the Fundamentals' has appeared with explanatory notes, serially in *The Advent*.

EUTHANASIA—A SOCIAL REMEDY?

Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment?

(St. Matthew)

VOLTAIRE loved men no less than letters. He shunned cant and hypocrisy for their degrading clutch on the mind of society. He abhorred war and violence for their utter disregard of the sanctity of the human life. "Twenty years are required", he puts it picturesquely, "to bring man from the state of a plant in which he exists in the womb of his mother and from the state of an animal, which is his condition in infancy, to a state in which the maturity of reason begins to make itself felt. Thirty centuries are necessary in which to discover even a little of his stature. An eternity would be required to know anything of his soul. But one moment suffices in which to kill him." Thus wrote this father of the Age of Enlightenment in Europe in the 18th century. We have certainly travelled far within the two centuries that have gone by since then. Today man is no entity, no individual; he is a unit, a number in the serried ranks of the forces of the State, a cell of the body socio. He lives and moves as a member of society and the necessity of his life ceases with the end of his effective utility to it. Thenceforth he is a burden and the quicker he removes himself from the scene, the better.

We are prompted to take note of this line of thinking on coming across a suggestion seriously put forward in the pages of the *British Medical Journal* that all old people who are usually a burden on the young should voluntarily take euthanasia. For sheer callous disregard of the accepted values of human life this proposal is hard to beat. It shows in bold glare the nadir to which the materialist civilisation has descended, shows the very dregs of the goblets of selfishness and self-aggrandisement to which men and nations have betaken themselves. The narrow and self-centred animal outlook that engenders such proposals is not the less repulsive for the voluntary sanction that is sought to be given to them. Voluntary or involuntary, the principle involved is the same—it is the sanctity of human life in itself, *per se*, its right to exist on its own. Are we justified in terminating an individual life whether for its own good as we allege or for our own riddance as we more honestly confess? The means used are really secondary. Once we deny the intrinsic value of life, it is more or less a matter of convenience and taste whether it is grape-shot or cyanide capsule that is used. It is

also secondary—once it is accepted that a life can be ended when it ceases to be useful—whether the consent of the individual is obtained or not. The clause of voluntary readiness is merely a concession to that irrational human heritage which Science and Reason have not yet fully succeeded in dislodging, viz. sentiment. And if life can be ended by others, why not by oneself? Euthanasia (with or without consent), homicide and even suicide thus hinge for their justification on the meaning and aim which we are prepared to concede to life.

It is a common argument that it is the recognition of the dignity of life that is responsible for the wide-spread use of euthanasia in our treatment of the sub-human species. The moment we see that life cannot be itself, it cannot function for its own growth and sustenance and that it can only drag on with utmost pain to itself, we put an end to the life of the animal, thus mercifully delivering it out of its useless struggles. That helps the cause of evolution in Nature by shortening its periods of agony and exhaustion. Could not the same be done with profit on the human level? The answer to this question depends, as we said, upon the significance we attach to the birth of man, the aim and goal set for his life. And we may at once say that whichever way we look and interpret the meaning of the existence of man on earth, whether in the downright manner of the past materialists or as believers in the spiritual evolution of the soul, an unnatural ending of life is an aggression on its intention and defeat of its purpose.

Let us assume for a moment that man is just this body with a life and nothing more, his mind being a mere epiphenomenon if not the result of the interaction of life and body. Or accept this delineation of man by Santayana: 'Lalande or whoever it was, who searched the heavens with his telescope and could find no God, would not have found the human mind if he had searched the brain with a microscope.....Belief in such a spirit is simply belief in magic.....The only facts observed by the psychologist are physical facts.....the soul is only a fine quick organisation within the material animal.....a prodigious network of nerves and tissues growing in each generation out of a seed.' A 'prodigious network' and 'growing'—that sums up their evaluation of man. He is a product of Nature's evolution. He grows and helps others to grow. Progress is his watchword, happiness his goal. Life-force is his aide and the body his vehicle. He has an instinctive attraction to all that nourishes and strengthens his being, an equally instinctive repulsion from all that afflicts or maims it. This is a universal truth that could be observed with a striking uniformity in the lower species of life. Man struggles and endeavours to win happiness and joy no matter what the price. He would go through any amount of struggle and strife to

achieve happiness. Who has not felt, at one time or other, one with the poet when he exclaims:

“Be it after a hundred years! Joy surely awaits him that would but live.”¹

He treats death as the enemy, for death ends all his hopes and chances of happiness. Even in death he clings to life. There have been scores of instances where we have heard that people who in moments of despair took poison, pathetically tried to come back to life and lamented their unfortunate move. To end one's own life is thus foolish enough. But to propose to end other people's lives for the reason that they can no longer contribute to our own happiness and are on the other hand an incubus like the old man on the back of Sindabad, is something infinitely worse.

Life is not made to order. After years of toil and experiment running into aeons, Nature has developed the human species through a series of progressive life-embodiments, and it is criminal to destroy wilfully a human organism into the making of which has gone such scrupulous care and sustained industry. We cannot lightly throw it away. The higher the species of life which has evolved consciousness that we harm and destroy, the more wasteful we are of Nature's effort. That would seem to be the just viewpoint of those in our country who have abstained from converting living beings into articles of food. The plant has life, it is true. But it is less developed, less organised and evolved than that of an animal and, in the economy of Nature, a minimum utilisation of lower products of evolution for the sustenance and growth of the higher is unavoidable, certainly permissible. Life is put forward by Nature on purpose—howsoever we may interpret the purpose—and it is demanded of us that we take the highest care to foster, sustain and help it to fulfil itself. Man is endowed with an intelligence—call it mind, call it consciousness—which shall guide and foster into fruitful channels the stream of life of which each one is full. If life flags, Nature rushes in with a fresh infusion of the sustaining strength. Till there is the least possibility of a life (deliberately put forth) realising even a modicum of its potentialities, life struggles to live and Nature does her best. To put an end to the life of man by external means is thus to interfere with the workings of Nature, to forcibly deny the claim of life to live, a claim which it voices to its last gasp. To help life with all the means we are capable of, to enlarge it and uplift it should be our aim rather than to break it up,

¹ एति जीवन्मानन्दो नरं वर्षशतादपि ।

and eliminate all possible chance of its recovery and growth. For one never knows. The potentialities of life, the resilience of the physical body and the workings of the human mind have always overflowed the bounds set to them by our scientific calculations and charts and have testified to the inadequacy of a purely empirical and materialistic interpretation of the fact and significance of life. Surely man is much more than a mind residing in a living body. The secret of his existence is to be found not in his physical body which is only a vehicle, not in the life-force which merely activates and enlivens the body, not even in the mind which functions as a sort of an ineffective, co-ordinating and leading agency of both the life and body, but in a deeper principle behind the exterior of man called variously as the psyche, the spirit, the soul. It is the underlying fact of the soul that gives meaning and direction to all life. The soul is the central entity round which is organised the complex personality of man, it is the fulcrum around which revolves the ever-moving wheel of life. The soul is a developing proposition put forth into manifestation: to grow and build itself in the perfected figure and status visualised for it before it was cast into the seed-form is its one business. All the rest of man has value only for its instrumental function; all the circumstances and events of life are determined by the needs of the growing soul, its demands and its willings:

‘On inner values hangs the outer plan’ (Sri Aurobindo).

Considered in the context of this ‘delivering thought’ the whole question of euthanasia, suicide, falls into its proper perspective. The soul has chosen a particular life, a particular body for its embodiment and is utilising it for its growth. It gathers up experiences, takes the substance out of them and grows by absorbing the essence of all—good and evil, pleasant and painful. It profits even by the bitter and the painful in a manner that can hardly be conceived of by our normal mind but could be perhaps imagined, particularly when we remember how the higher reaches of our mind contemplate with serenity, even with a certain delight, drawing the *rasa* in the most tragic episodes narrated in literature or enacted on the stage. The soul demands these experiences and makes use of them, whatever the body may feel about it or the life-force that has to bear the initial shock of the world. Shall we then be justified in closing the span of an individual life—be it animal or human—because the body is suffering or is unfit to be of service? Are we sure that the soul which is the one essential thing that invests his entire life with a meaning may not be wanting after all to go through the experience? And if we deny it the chance of doing so by our

precipitate action, would not the soul have to go through the same round once again for an identical experience? For, when a soul chooses an experience, it is with a view to derive a certain element for its growth and it must have it before it proceeds further. The question is not so simple as it looks; nor are our motives in these matters altogether altruistic. As Sri Aurobindo says: "There are many other factors which make people incline to this short and merciful way out of the difficulty—the nervous inability to bear the sight and hearing of so much suffering, the unavailing trouble, the disgust and inconvenience—all tend to give force to the idea that the animal itself would want to be out of it. But what does the animal really feel about it—may it not be clinging to life in spite of the pain? Or may not the soul have accepted these things for a quicker evolution into a higher state of life? If so, the mercy dealt out may conceivably interfere with the animal's Karma. In fact the right decision might vary in each case and depend on a knowledge which the human mind has not—and it might well be said that until it has, it has not the right to take life."

M. P. PANDIT

REVIEW

SURVEY OF INDIAN HISTORY¹

HISTORY is truly philosophy in action. It is no mere chronicle of kings and generals however great, record of battles and revolutions however convulsive. A history to be worth the name ought to be the story of the beginnings and rise of the people it deals with, their struggles and achievements, their drawbacks and failures, their contributions to the sum-total of human civilisation and progress in the varied spheres of life, the influences they were subject to and the influences they generated from their endeavour. Individual achievements have undoubtedly a place, an important place too, but only as related to the whole. The detached historian—we need take no notice of those national apologists who have long traded under this label—looks upon the object of his study as a whole and not piecemeal, he looks above as well as under, analyses the motive-forces that actuated the life-movement of the people, traces developments taking into account not merely the laws of lineal causation but recognising the importance of collateral causation as well, and endeavours to read the aim or Idea or Ideal which every society seeks to realise and express, consciously or unconsciously. Only such a study has value for man in as much as it sifts all that has lasting and permanent educative value from much that is of purely local and temporary significance. It is a chart of human effort in different times and climes with an unmistakable message of caution and guidance, hope and call to all that choose to profit by it. 'Let my son often read and reflect on History. This is the only true philosophy,' said Napoleon in his last days. And the book under review can well claim, on many counts, to belong to this worthy class of profitable study.

A Survey of Indian History is a remarkable book. In less than 300 pages the author, Sardar K. M. Panikkar, takes what he modestly calls 'a bird's-eye view of the panorama of Indian History' extending 'over five thousand years of unbroken succession'. He starts from the very beginnings of recorded Indian history—the age of the Vedas, and rushes us along, pausing only at important junctures signified by the advent or exit of epoch-making personalities, marked by events of far-reaching consequence. Notable wars and

¹ *A Survey of Indian History*. BY K. M. PANIKKAR. Published by the National Information & Publications Ltd., National House, 6 Tulloch Road, Apollo Bunder, Bombay. Price Rs. 7/8 (pp. 338).

treaties, renowned emperors and generals are to him important milestones where he stops to look around, to gaze into the surrounding country, the peoples, their customs and their lives and reads the direction of the journey before proceeding ahead until he arrives by the long route, punctuated with so many appropriate halts, to the close of the British period and the eve of the new era that we are fortunate to witness.

It is usual for books on Indian history to begin with the Vedic Aryans. This is, as the author points out, partly the result of the theories of Indo-Germanic scholars that all high civilisation, here as elsewhere, originated with the Aryan emigrants. The excavations at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa however have testified to the existence of an indigenous civilisation which attained a state of social and economic life that speaks of some centuries of development behind it. Heras calls these people Proto-Indians; but this view has been contested by some who hold that these 'Proto-Indians' themselves are an earlier wave of emigrants who built up a civilisation in India. Apart from evidence of this Indus-Valley civilisation of pre-Aryan peoples, there have been further evidences of different civilisations in other parts of the country, notably from the later excavations in the Narbada valley. But as yet it has not been possible to construct any sufficiently clear picture of those people for lack of important details as also the means wherewith to interpret the material available. However, the Aryans with such records of their society as could be traced in the Rig Veda, provide a more secure starting-point. The author shares the general Western view that these ancients were 'a vigorous nomadic people', 'believers in magic and sacrifice' and the Rig Veda is a record of their early fights with the black Dasyus, a record of the transition of the Aryans from the pastoral to the agricultural stage. To look upon the Rig Veda as anything else, he continues, for instance to read higher thought or metaphysical speculation into it is unhistoric. These developments relate to a much later stage of their society, the post-Vedic age when the sages of the Upanishad appear. Of course such a view has no support from the Upanishads themselves and is opposed to indigenous Tradition. Thenceforth the Aryans, who have by now emerged as undisputed masters of the fertile land, mount a steady parabola of progress. Their intellectual effort was remarkable, their Dharma catholic and social framework elastic. The classification of *Chaturvarnya* was gradually established, but these divisions were more based on status and culture rather than on *varna* or colour. Kshatriyas taught philosophy and Brahmanas fought at the head of armies; lower-class heroes sought the hand of Kshatriya princesses. (p.21). The old distinction between the Aryans and the Non-aryans was maintained but there was provision for admittance of the

latter into the Aryan fold. The ceremony of Vratyastoma is an unmistakable evidence of it. There are instances of many tribes thus admitted coming to be known as Vratya Kshatriyas. (p. 17). Political progress kept pace with the social and the Indo-Gangetic plain was gradually filled up with growing kingdoms. By the close of the seventh century B.C. when 'for the first time we are able to establish with some certainty a chronological order for events' we find the kingdoms of Magadha, Kosala, Avanti side by side with the Vrishnis, Bhojas and Andhakas who had a non-monarchical form of government and republics like the Lichchavis and the Mallas. The tendency however was for a gradual reduction of the number of different groups into larger units, by alliance or by conquest.

By this time however, as it happens with most human institutions, a certain rigidity had set in into the social and religious organisation of these people and the old religion and Dharma had a less living appeal, encrusted as they were with growing shells of ritual and orthodoxy. Many heretical sects had sprung up by the time Buddha appeared. There were, for instance, the Ajivikas (said to be Sudra Sanyasins) who denied the basic doctrine of Karma, the followers of Ajita Kesakambaten who taught that all ended with death and then there was the 'very popular teacher' Purana Kassapo—a Brahmin—'whose main doctrine was that action was neither of merit nor of demerit'. (p. 30). What is remarkable is that even then there was a large freedom of thought and opinion in the Hindu Religion, so that when Buddhism came in, there was no clash of the kind we witness in the histories of other—the western and near-western—countries. Both developed or existed side by side as currents of the Aryan religion. As the author observes, 'the exclusiveness of religious doctrines is a Semitic conception which was unknown to India for a long time'. (p. 39).

Three centuries before the Christian era the Mauryan Empire had been set on a firm footing with Chandra Gupta on throne, thanks to Chanakya, that genius in statecraft, and for the first time 'the whole of Hindustan from the Indus to Brahmaputra and from the Himalayas to Vindhya was organised under one effective authority'. The State organisation of the Mauryas, the prosperity of the people of the time is described by the author in considerable detail. He observes *inter alia* that 'the taxation system of the Mauryan Empire is not fundamentally different from what exists in India today. It is Chanakya's revenue system that came down to the British and was perfected by them.' (p. 36). Asoka was the last great king of the Mauryas and after his death we pass to the Golden Age of the Imperial Guptas which saw a great spread of material prosperity reflected in the art and architecture of the period, the efflorescence of Sanskrit learning,—

the redaction of the major Puranas and Epics,'¹ popularisation of Buddhist Kavyas like Buddha Charita and Soundarananda. The formulation of the theory of Zero and the consequent evolution of the Decimal System, the astronomical discoveries of Arya Bhata 'who discovered that the earth rotates round its own axis and who calculated with only a very slight margin of error the duration of the day' (p. 69) belong to this period which came to an end by the fifth century A.D.

The author makes an interesting reference to Devi worship and Tantric forms of worship prevalent in the first century B.C. as evidenced in the Brihad Katha of Gunadhya and referring to the fact that ceremonials of Tantric system were well established in the Gupta period, refutes the view held by some that the Tantric forms of worship arose from the degenerate forms of Buddhism and holds on the other hand that 'the Guhya Samaja doctrines of the Buddhists clearly had their inspiration in the old time Tantric cults of India'. (p. 72).

All these centuries the southern peninsula developed its own life practically independent of the northern dynasties. The Cholas, the Cheras and the Pandyas were the three kingdoms (Trairajya) that dominated the country. One notable feature of the southern civilisation was its maritime contacts abroad. The author traces flourishing trade connections with the Middle East at least as far back as 1200 B.C. He draws attention to the Arikamedu excavations near Pondicherry which have revealed the existence of brisk intercourse between the southern ports and those of the Roman Empire. The present reviewer had occasion to visit the site when the excavations were in progress, and it was a revelation to him to see the symmetrical lay-out of the houses, the roads, the bath, the well—all these had been maintained wonderfully intact beneath the soils. Whole potteries were found bearing the inscriptions of names of Roman places (of their origin) and traders in the first century B.C. Broken vases and coins were found in plenty and told the same story.

There were other dynasties like the Kalingas on the east coast and the Satavahanas in central India—to the latter we owe the magnificent temples of Ellora and Ajanta. The Pallavas and the Chalukyas later inherited the tradition of the Satavahanas and between them dominated the south for nearly three centuries.

¹ The author ascribes the preservation of these epics and other classics of Indian literature and tradition to the colossal effort of the learning of this period in redacting, renewing and re-editing them (by eliminating foreign and barbaric ideals which had crept into them). He quotes Dr. Sukthankar in this connection saying 'These are probably just the touches that have saved the Mahabharata from the fate of being consigned to the limbo of oblivion which has fallen upon its sister epics like the Gilgamesh.' (p. 68).

The maritime intercourse was not confined to countries on the shores of the Mediterranean or the Persian Gulf alone, nor was it commercial only. Communications had been established with islands in the Pacific centuries before the Christian era. And series of emigrations, east and south-eastwards, took place by land across Malaya and by sea through the straits of Singapore. These expeditions were not merely of a cultural and religious character. They were political also and Hindu kingdoms were well established in the early centuries after Christ, in Funan (later Kambuja), Borneo, Java and Sumatra. The colonists established a number of principalities in the other Indonesian islands and naturally they carried and established the culture and customs of the land of their birth from which they had sailed. Many of these influences and traditions are still strong in these islands even two thousand years later, uncorrupted by foreign western influences to which they were exposed in their mother-country, a fact which was well attested in the recent call of M. Alain Danielou to Indian musicians to go to Indonesia if they wanted to see ancient Indian orchestral music in its pure form.

Kings of these colonies endowed and helped to maintain universities like the Nalanda which were established in the north and the Kanchi in the south. Even after the break-up of the Gupta Empire in the early years of the 6th century A.D., the progress and prosperity of the country—north and south—was not interrupted. Monarchs like Harsha and Nagabhata in the north, Pulikeshi in the south, added chapters of glory to the political, economic and literary annals of the country while Acharya Shankara in the 8th century resuscitated the Hindu religion from the morass of ritualism in which it was stuck and armed it 'with a corpus of philosophic doctrines, which has endured so long against the attacks of Islam and Christianity.' (p. 124).

The author then takes account of the conditions prevailing in India on the eve of the Muslim contact (by the tenth century A.D.) which coincided with the period of over-ripeness and decay that was inevitable after such a long term of unprecedented advancement and prosperity. The persistent invasions of the Islamic forces from across the north-western frontier, attempts by Indian kings to repel them, some successful, others unsuccessful, establishment of Muslim dynasties in the north and new Hindu kingdoms like Vijayanagar and Islamic like the Bahamani in the south—all these turbulent changes and counter-changes culminating in the National State of Akbar in the 16th century are traced in the succeeding chapters. The complete reversal of the state policy of Akbar by Aurangzeb and the disastrous consequences of his fatal step, the wars of succession that followed his death, the rise and the fall of the Maratha Empire, the

advent of Western Powers on the scene with the ultimate assumption of control and authority by the British for nearly a century and a half—lead the narration up to date.

The author concludes with a few observations on Indian history. He reflects on the uninterrupted stretch of this civilisation for over five thousand years and points out that it would not have been possible without 'a continuous purpose of a people'. What is this *purpose* that bases the ageless civilisation and culture of India? We have searched in vain, in the pages of this book, for the answer. Every nation, like every individual, has a purpose to fulfil, a potentiality to manifest, an Idea to realise. Every people have to develop and work out some contribution which is their own to the progress and growth of the larger humanity. Once that is done or if they prove unequal to the task, their civilisation becomes a spent force and unless it renovates itself and endeavours to make its own life useful by a further or another contribution, it soon belongs to past history. Greece, Rome, Egypt are notable examples of the past; and, we may add, the western countries of Europe including perhaps Britain are examples of the present. Each made a standing contribution, helped to put a brick in the rising edifice of human civilisation. Each was actuated by one idea in the main. What is the Master-Idea that has dominated the Indian civilisation, that Idea which gives it a unity of purpose without which continuity of life over millenniums is hardly possible, particularly when we remember that all other civilisations of comparable antiquity, including the Chinese, have long ceased to be living forces? A dispassionate observer would at once spot out the spiritual as the one towering standard under which have marched, with all their infinite variety of banners, the innumerable hosts that have peopled the History of Indian Civilisation dating back to the Vedic Age.

For the age of the Vedas was not an age of primitive barbarians nor the hymns of the Rig Veda ballads of village feuds and marauding parties, as the author assumes after the manner of Western scholars. On the other hand, the Rishis of the Rig Veda, leaders of the society of that age, were men with a deep inner life and were what we would call in our parlance mystics. They did not indulge in metaphysical speculations, we concede. They may not have manifested the reasoning and logical intellect for the purpose of metaphysical analysis. But that does not mean they were devoid of the faculties of the heart and soul, even as Intellect and Reason between themselves do not exhaust the means of progress or of search for Truth. It was the Age of Mystics when Intuition reigned and Truths of life were first glimpsed, then realised and preserved in the sacred utterances of the seers

for posterity to cherish and propagate. As Sri Aurobindo says: "Here in India the reign of Intuition came first, intellectual mind developing afterwards in the later philosophy and science.....The Vedic Age was followed by a great outburst of intellect and philosophy which yet took spiritual truth as its basis and tried to reach it anew, not through a direct Intuition or occult process as did the Vedic seers, but by the power of the mind's reflective, speculative, logical thought; at the same time processes of Yoga were developed which used the thinking mind as a means of arriving at spiritual realisation, spiritualising this mind itself at the same time. Then followed an era of the development of philosophies and Yoga-processes which more and more used the emotional and aesthetic being as the means of spiritual realisation and spiritualised the emotional level in man through the heart and feeling. This was accompanied by Tantric and other processes which took up the mental will, the life-will, the will of sensations and made them at once the instruments and field of spiritualisation. In the Hathayoga and the various attempts at divinisation of the body there is also a line of endeavour which attempted to arrive at the same achievement with regard to living Matter." This is the true sense of the persistent note of spirituality in the Indian mind, its key-note, now more resonant, now less, and not as the author states (while dealing with the Bhakti Movement in the chapter on Mediaeval Religion) that the 'sudden desire to surrender everything and seek refuge in God.....found universal acceptance among the Hindus of the day, because of the low ebb of their material prosperity and there was nothing else to look to in this world. Nations, like men, he continues, find solace in God when they are enslaved and weakened in spirit. Shades of Marx! Economic Determinants! It is but one step to Montesquieu who ascribed the Indian addiction to Immutable Brahman, belief in the ultimate Repose and Non-Existence to the enervating effect of the tropical climate which enforced idleness on man for the greater part of the day and developed distaste for activity. That explains, it would seem, the Hindu preference for Calm and Repose and its dread of Fire as the foreman of Hades! Indian civilisation has its roots in the intuitive perception of the Fathers of old that the world is a creation of God, man a deliberate entity put forth by the Maker to work out His intention on Earth. Sedulously watered and nourished by the far-seeing sages of the Upanishads, the plant has blossomed forth, through the ages, like the Banyan Tree with innumerable branches crowded with foliage, branches shooting far into the realms of soul, mind and body, Philosophy and Religion, Arts and Sciences, covered indeed in places with alien shrubs and spurious growth, needing certainly timely pruning here and there, yet

ever the self-same Tree that has always extended its highest reaches into the infinite skies above and spread its arms wide to embrace the entire life around. Such a civilisation knows no end because its whole meaning and purpose is to serve the progressive self-revelation of the Eternal. Such is the culture which Dr. Cousins described the other day as "a culture that arose out of the depths of their hearts and was an expression of their vision of cosmic Reality. It was because of this that it could not be wiped out from the world."

What we have stated in this respect does not detract from the value of the book as a whole. There is not a page in the book which fails to hold our interest. The Glossary and the Index at the end add to the utility of this neatly printed volume.

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